

December 2016 • Socialist Workers Party pre-conference

BULLETIN 3

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This bulletin is for members of the SWP only. It should not be distributed or forwarded to others

GUIDE TO SWP NATIONAL CONFERENCE 6-8 JANUARY, LONDON

WELCOME TO pre-conference bulletin 3. The SWP annual conference will take place on Friday 6, Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 January in London. Registration starts at 5pm on Friday 6 January. The conference finishes at 4.30pm on Sunday 8 January.

We want our conference to be a democratic event in which comrades can fully participate.

Whether you have joined recently or been a member for years, you should feel able to join the debates and put forward your views.

Pre-conference bulletins

The main method of discussion is through the pre-conference bulletins (PCBs) where comrades can send in their views, their experiences, their proposals and their ideas. These bulletins are for members only and should not be shared outside the party.

Conference procedures

The main method of discussion at conference is through what we call commissions. These are documents drawn up at the end of conference sessions which summarise the main strands of discussion and any action to be taken. These can be amended. And if there is more than one view in the discussion then there can be alternative commissions which are then voted on.

This method is democratic, transparent, flexible and open to the input of delegates. It means that the very latest developments and the insights and arguments that appear in the debate can be reflected in the party's decisions.

Commissions allow delegates to listen to the experiences from the rest of the party, consider the arguments put forwards and then make decisions. However it is not a method that people are used to for trade union or student union conferences. We will make sure it is fully and repeatedly explained at the conference.

We also want districts to hold meetings after delegates are elected to introduce them to the way conference works and to deal with any questions in an unhurried atmosphere.

Sometimes there's a need for more specific debates. These can usually take the form of commissions or amendments to commissions. But they may also take the form of motions.

National Committee (NC)

Every year at SWP annual conference delegates elect a National Committee of 50 members. The party's constitution says, "The National Committee assists the Central Committee in providing political leadership for the party and reviews the party's political and organisational work between conferences. Its decisions are binding on the Central Committee. In the event of a major disagreement between the Central Committee and the National Committee, the NC has the right to call

a special conference. The NC normally meets every two months between annual conferences."

Those elected to the NC also attend party councils and party conference by right. In this bulletin are the names of those who have been nominated for the NC.

Central Committee (CC)

The CC consists of members elected by the conference according to the following procedure:

The outgoing Central Committee circulated a provisional slate for the new CC in PCB1 for pre-conference discussion.

At the conference the outgoing CC proposes a final slate (which may have changed as a result of the pre-conference discussion). This slate, along with any other that is supported by a minimum of five delegates, is discussed and voted on by conference.

Between conferences the CC is entrusted with the political leadership of the organisation and is responsible for the national direction of all political and organisational work, subject to the decision-making powers of Conference.

Childcare

The question of childcare is an important one for all comrades, but particularly for women. Given we live in a society where the ruling ideas say that women are expected to bear the main burden of looking after children, it is women who are hit hardest when there is no consideration of this issue.

It is very difficult to provide a full crèche on the Marxism 2016 model for conference. At Marxism we use a combination of the (legally required) trained childcare workers and volunteers. It's hugely expensive but we do it because we recognise that it's necessary.

The cost is simply too high for us to provide that level of crèche for every party event. But depending on the age/situation of the child involved, the delegate's district could make provision to help, or a comrade could bring a friend to look after the child and be provided with a room at the event and some assistance, or the child could stay with someone else in London.

None of this is ideal, but it's possible to sort out such issues. They have worked at recent conferences.

Access

The conference venue is fully accessible. If there are any other needs that delegates require, please contact the National Office and we will seek to help.

All pre-conference discussion should take place through the PCBs, the aggregates and the party's democratic structures, and not by any other means.

If you have any questions about conference, please contact the National Office on 020 7840 5600

Amy Leather and Charlie Kimber,
SWP joint national secretaries

NATIONAL COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

The nominations below (ordered alphabetically on the basis of comrades' first names) were received on time and have been accepted. If you think you sent in a nomination and your name does not appear below, please contact the national office immediately.

1. Adam R (Bolton)
2. Ameen H (Manchester)
3. Anne A (Islington)
4. Bethan T (Manchester)
5. Bob F Glasgow
6. Bridget P (Birmingham)
7. Candy U (Central London)
8. Charlotte A (Glasgow)
9. Chris F (York)
10. Chris N (Kingston)
11. Claire C (Waltham Forest)
12. Dave S (Glasgow)
13. Donny G (Edinburgh)
14. Eileen S (East London)
15. Ellen C (Croydon)
16. Emma D (Haringey)
17. Esme C (Waltham-Forest)
18. Gary Mc (Haringey)
19. Huw W (Bristol)
20. Jack B (Newcastle)
21. Jan N (Islington Branch)
22. Jess E (South London)
23. Jim F (Waltham Forest)
24. Jon W (Portsmouth)
25. Laura M (Wakefield)
26. Mark D (Lewisham)
27. Martin E (Manchester)
28. Maxine B (Sheffield)
29. Moyra S (Brent and Harrow)
30. Nahella A (Manchester)
31. Paul H (Brixton)
32. Paul Mc (Tower Hamlets)
33. Phil R (South London)
34. Phil T (Rotherham)
35. Richard (West Midlands)
36. Richard D (Kingston)
37. Rob F (Newham)
38. Roddy S (Newham)
39. Roger L (South London)
40. Saba S (Ealing)
41. Sabby S (Camden)
42. Sally K (Wakefield)
43. Sam S (Newham)
44. Sharon C (Birmingham)
45. Shaun D (Hackney)
46. Sheila Mc (Tower Hamlets)
47. Simon H (Haringey)
48. Siobhan H (Waltham Forest)
49. Talat A (Edinburgh)
50. Tim K-H (Norwich)
51. Tony P (Walthamstow)
52. Yunus B (Newcastle)

AFTER TRUMP

Central Committee

Donald Trump's election as US president shocked the world. He has followed it up by surrounding himself with advisers and potential cabinet figures who include racists, misogynists, ultra-imperialists—and the fascist sympathiser Stephen Bannon.

But Trump's choices are not all "outsiders". The retired Marine General James "Mad Dog" Mattis, put forward for defence secretary, was appointed by Barack Obama to be commander of US Central Command.

Trump has also shown his capacity to hurl grenades at the neoliberal world order.

If he carries through his pledge to dump the Trans Pacific Partnership on day one in office, Trump would shatter a painstakingly constructed US attempt to isolate China.

Both the Leave vote in Britain and the election of Trump were deeply disruptive to many of the corporations, politicians and institutions that rule in society.

We stand fully with those who are pre-testing in the streets against Trump and his foul team.

We have nothing in common with the calls from Obama, Clinton and others for everyone to "work together for the good of America".

Clinton actually won the popular vote by more than two million. It's easy to imagine what Trump would have done if he had beaten Clinton by two million but lost through the electoral college system.

He would have called his supporters to "stop the fix" But, just as when the Democrats accepted George Bush stealing the 2000 election against Al Gore, the interest of the US ruling class in stability and the veneration of "democracy" come first.

Much more struggle will be needed against Trump's attacks on workers, migrants, women, LGBT+ people and many more. It is impossible to be sure just what direction he will take in some areas.

But mass resistance in workplaces and on the streets will be needed.

Trump's success was not just in mobilising racists, sexists and other reactionaries.

He won because there is a boiling anger in US society about the failures of the system and a hatred for establishment politicians such as Hillary Clinton. Clinton, the choice of Wall Street and the majority of billionaires produced scant enthusiasm among suffering US workers.

Clinton could not turn out the same vote as Obama, even among black and Latino workers, despite the threat from Trump.

Trump's speeches played on Clinton's weaknesses. In New Hampshire, for example, he told a rally, "We're gonna bring businesses back. We're gonna have businesses that used to be in New Hampshire, that are now in Mexico, come back to New Hampshire. You can tell them, to go fuck themselves! Because, they let you down, and they left!"

This combination of "America First" nationalism and strident reflection of class bitterness was very successful.

It is highly likely that Trump's hollow and hypocritical concern for the poor could have been punctured by Bernie Sanders. Sanders could have offered change and improvements in workers' lives rather than Clinton's defence of the status quo.

Trump's win has spread depression among much of the left. It can seem that a tide of reaction is sweeping everything before it and the right or the far right are making the running everywhere.

The world looks very different to how it did in 2011, the year of the Egyptian revolution, the 15-M movement in the Spanish state, Occupy, major strikes across Europe and in Britain the biggest ever trade union demonstration, the riots and two million on strike over pensions.

Today many activists' views are dominated by Trump's win, and fears this could be followed by a surge in support for Geert Wilders' party in the Netherlands general election in March, and a possible win for the National Front's Marine Le Pen in the presidential election in May.

Such events are far from impossible. But they are not inevitable.

This is not wishful thinking or a refusal to recognise the very real dangers and challenges ahead. But when history hangs in the balance we need realistic analysis, intervention and activity, not passivity and resignation.

The fury in society can be dragged to the right or to the left. This is the era of Jeremy Corbyn, the mass demonstrations in South Korea, the world's biggest ever general strike in India, the general strike at the end of November in Italy—as well as Trump, Wilders and Le Pen.

Hofer did not win in Austria—partly because of the work of anti-Nazis. The Neue Linkswende group played a high-profile role in fixing the Nazi label on Hofer.

In Italy the referendum result has felled prime minister Matteo Renzi. The vote was welcomed by the right but was not a right-wing vote. The CGIL union federation, the FIOM union, Rifondazione Comunista, sections of Renzi's party and the large majority of young voters supported No.

The vote is a further hammer blow to the EU austerity regime.

But both in Austria and Italy the battle is far from over. If, as seems likely, there are parliamentary elections in Austria next year, the FPÖ party that Hofer could emerge as the largest party. At present the opinion polls (for what they are worth) in Italy suggest that the right could win.

Our task in Britain is to seek to shape the mood of bitterness in society leftwards and, in particular, to help build Stand Up To Racism as a mass social movement.

The SUTR conference on 8 October showed the potential. Around 1,500 joined one of Britain's biggest ever anti-racism conferences. It featured the leader of the Labour Party, the shadow home secretary

and many other trade union and campaigning figures.

The follow-up rallies in some areas have been highly successful—170 attended in Hackney, 160 in Bristol and 130 in Birmingham.

Taking part in and working alongside others to build SUTR is the SWP's priority. Racism on the rise means violence and systematic oppression, and a divided working class will be unable to defend itself. Everywhere ruling classes seek to whip up hatred and scapegoating. Racism is central to all the debates taking place in society, and it will continue to be.

In fighting racism we will be among people who are hungry for ideas to change the world. Every comrade, every branch must be part of these SUTR events:

- **20 January:** Demonstrations across Britain on the day of Trump's inauguration
- **4 February:** SUTR trade union conference to discuss how to build in workplaces, the arguments needed to win workers away from racism, how workers can defend freedom of movement, learning from those who have built SUTR at work and strengthening SUTR in the unions.
- **Mid-late February:** SUTR local rallies to build for 18 March (check the school half term dates in your area and avoid them).
- **18 March:** SUTR demonstrations in London and Glasgow as part of an international day of action.

Planning for all of this has to happen now. Speakers, venue and publicity for the February rallies need to be organised before Christmas, coaches booked for 18 March, trade unionists booked up for 4 February now.

SUTR will produce a sticker advertising 18 March and these should be mass distributed. We want high streets where loads of people are wearing stickers and workplaces, schools and universities where dozens of people wear the badges.

SUTR is our priority, but it certainly does not mean it is our only activity. We remain central to Stop the War, the fight against fracking and climate change and other campaigns.

In particular, socialists have to part of the fight against austerity. We need to be part of the battles to defend key public services such as the NHS and to fight the council and other cuts. Providing real answers to low pay, lack of housing, and cuts in the NHS undermines the racists who provide false answers.

On 23 December we will receive the full details of the NHS-slashing Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) in England. We must take an active role in combating them and boosting local and national campaigns.

The Tories are in deep trouble, lacking any real clue as to how to resolve the contradictory pressures of big business demanding entry to the single market and government backbenchers and some voters

demanding restrictions on immigration.

We can expect further turbulence.

We will continue to put forward our own vision of a Brexit that opposes austerity, boosts working class people's living standards, defends the NHS, weakens racism, and defends and extends rights.

In addition there is a crisis about falling real pay, which will worsen if inflation rises as is expected.

The TUC recently analysed the experience of five recessions in Britain since 1854 and concluded that "The most comparable decline [to today] is that from 1921, through the dark 1920s and into the great depression. Even in that decline real earnings were restored to the pre-crisis peak after ten years. The Office for Budget Responsibility figures suggest that the latest pre-crisis peak will only be restored in year 14, i.e. 2021.

"So this is the longest decline in real wages since at least 1854—162 years from 2016." It went on to say this might be an over-optimistic scenario.

Unfortunately this bleak analysis was not followed by a plan to hit back. Much of the union bureaucracy will argue that once the Trade Union Act is fully implemented (likely to happen in the next few months) then big national strikes will be impossible.

We don't accept this and must continue to push for national action. This could, and should, have happened recently in the NUT and UCU if the union leaders had acted differently.

But comrades should also think about the possibility of fighting at local level. We need to be alive to the chance to seize upon an issue and resist. Our strategy cannot be to just denounce a lack of action by the union leaders. We also need to look for action that can shift the mood—and put more pressure on the bureaucracy.

The inspiring example of the Durham teaching assistants shows how a push from below can overcome the union leaders' cowardice and pessimism.

The TUC may call a major demonstration in April. If that does happen we will build it just as we built for the People's Assembly demonstration at the Tory Party conference in Birmingham.

We will be part of health campaigns and resistance to the Housing Act—which has already helped to defeat the "Pay to Stay" element.

However, SUTR remains the priority. We have limited resources and have to concentrate our efforts to have maximum effect. To take one example, there is an NHS demonstration on 4 March backed by a range of health campaigns and the Unite union.

Of course we will strongly build it and support it, but SUTR's 18 March demonstrations are the priority for us.

Finally, this is an intensely political time. Activists are watching global developments, not just national ones. Our meetings can provide clear analysis and offer a way to

shape the outcome of events. People who want to be activists rather than spectators can be won to the party.

In the last couple of months we have seen more recruitment to the SWP. That trend has to be generalised. We plan a new members' and students national school on Saturday 18 February and that has to be backed by local educational work.

Our branches have to be places where we can discuss often complex political situations and organise activity. They must have a high level of politics and the outward-looking face of an interventionist party.

These are urgent times. Socialists have to rise to the challenge.

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Central Committee

The great crisis of 2007-9 and its prolonged aftermath – what Michael Roberts calls the "Long Depression" – have produced two surges of political radicalisation.

First, in 2011 the Arab uprisings confirmed that the 21st century would be a century of revolutions. They also precipitated a wave of imitations – the occupation of squares in the Spanish state, Greece, and the United States – that brought together some of the traditions of the early movements against neoliberal globalisation with anger at the one percent who sparked off but survived the crisis. Counter-revolution in Egypt and Syria has not wiped out the effects of this radicalisation. They make themselves felt, secondly, in the upsurge of the reformist left – Syriza's election victory in 2015, the advance of Podemos, and, more surprising still, the Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Sanders phenomena in the main centres of neoliberal capitalism.

These developments have posed far more questions than answers. We have to confront different forms of defeat in Egypt and Greece. Huge uncertainties surround the future of Podemos and Corbynism. And of course we now have to deal with the successes of the populist right in capturing and channelling some of the anger generated by the crisis in a reactionary and racist direction.

In the early 2000s the combination of the movement for another globalisation and the Bush administration's war drive had a powerful unifying effect on the radical left in Europe and beyond. Alas, for nearly a decade, impulses for fragmentation and division have become stronger. The most important reason has been the problem of how to relate to left reformism. Substantial sections of the revolutionary left reacted uncritically to the rise of Syr-

iza, and there has been little accounting for its shift to the right in government (or indeed that of Podemos long in advance of the prospect of office).

There have been other sources of division. The dominant face of racism today is Islamophobia, but sections of the far left (most notoriously in France) have responded weakly. And a combination of factors precipitated the two most important organisations of the European far left – our own SWP and the Nouveau parti anticapitaliste in France – into severe crises in the past five years. This has weakened the revolutionary pole of the European far left and given more weight to left reformist parties – Syriza, Die Linke in Germany, the Bloco de Esquerda in Portugal – exactly when they fumbled their response to the eurozone crisis and austerity.

It's not entirely surprising that these developments have had a negative effect inside the International Socialist Tendency (IST). At the end of October, after a very brief debate, the assembly of En lucha, our sister organisation in the Spanish state, voted to dissolve, though maintaining a looser "network" in Catalonia. The liquidators justify this decision by pointing to the difficulties of a small revolutionary organisation navigating the big movements that developed out of the occupation of the squares in 2011 and have found electoral expression in Podemos.

These excuses are unconvincing. Why should difficulties lead to revolutionaries giving up? And the Fourth International organisation – Anticapitalistas – has succeeded in growing in recent years and exerting some influence in the formation of Podemos.

The real explanation lies in a long tradition of weak leadership and avoiding arguments in En lucha. This allowed a mutually damaging involvement by En lucha members in the British SWP crisis. Avoiding arguments doesn't solve difficulties – indeed very "soft" leaderships can turn nasty when challenged. En lucha activists in Seville, who had had the greatest success in the group in relating to the Podemos, were effectively driven out last year.

As a result of the self-destruction of En lucha, there are now two groups in the Spanish state – the Colectivo Acción Anticapitalista in Seville and marx21 (the minority that voted against liquidation) that are in touch with the IST Coordination and seek to continue building in our tradition.

It is also positive that the En lucha "dissolution commission" wishes its network "to remain part of the IST". The Coordination intends to maintain non-exclusive relations with all three groups, inviting them to participate in the IST meetings.

Underlying the collapse of En lucha is the belief that arguments are divisive and sectarian. But comradely debate can develop the political clarity needed to relate to and seek to influence big movements. For example, how do we address big reformist

movements that attract enthusiastic support but lack the strategy and programme needed to take on a system in crisis? Dealing with this problem requires analysis and discussion. Having the right arguments in a precondition to looking outwards.

In this respect the Irish SWP has been exemplary. As the driving force in People before Profit it has succeeded in relating to the popular mood against austerity on both sides of the border – PBP has won in the past year three seats in the Dail and two in the Northern Ireland Assembly. But the SWP remains a robustly revolutionary organisation that, at the same time as engaging in mass agitation, can offer clear Marxist analysis – for example in Kieran Allen's Ireland's Revolutionary Tradition and the Irish Marxist Review.

The most important unifying factor in the IST's work in Europe has been in responding to the rise of the racist right. We have played an important role in initiating new antiracist coalitions – Keerfa in Greece, Stand Up To Racism in Britain, Aufstehen gegen Rassismus in Germany, and Unitat contra el Feixisme i el Racisme in Catalonia (where comrades opposed to liquidation have played an important role).

In the past few years, these initiatives have transformed the annual UN antiracist day of action in March into a real focus of international mobilisation.

The advances of the right – symbolised by Trump's election – underline the importance of mobilising next year on 18 March. IST comrades in Europe are seeking to coordinate their antiracist work more effectively in order to meet this challenge.

But of course the IST exists outside Europe. Our comrades in the Middle East offer a very distinctive approach. They combine a strong grounding in the revolutionary Marxist tradition with the refusal to treat Islamism as a single reactionary mass.

The counter-revolutionary wave in the region and the increasingly repressive course taken by the Erdogan administration in Turkey have underlined the importance of the debate about Islamism. But it also underlines the importance of international solidarity and the defence of political prisoners, above all in Egypt under Sissi's jackboot.

But in an era of capitalist crisis and geopolitical instability no regime is safe. This has been brought home dramatically to South Korea's right-wing president, Park Geun-hye, as she faces giant demonstrations demanding her removal. Our comrades in Workers Solidarity have been in the thick of these marches. But this extraordinary upsurge followed a succession of defeats for the workers' movement in South Korea. We have to build organisations that can connect with upsurges like this that come unexpectedly to upset all the ruling class's calculations.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Central Committee

Martin (Manchester City Centre)

Kim (Scarborough)

Suzanne (Islington)

Lewis (student office)

The election of a climate denier to the American presidency, and his selection of similar-minded politicians to key roles in the US administration, should serve as a stark reminder that the battle to avoid irreversible environmental destruction has a long way to go.

We argued last year in the SWP's conference period that the environmental movement has grown in size and strength. Broadly, large sections are also adopting what might be called an anti-capitalist position.

It is worth reminding ourselves that last year's UN COP21 conference in Paris saw mass protests. Despite a formal French ban on demonstrations this global movement helped ensure that a commitment to limit warming to only 2 degrees (and ideally 1.5) was made as part of the conference declarations. In Britain some 70,000 protested in London in the run up to COP21, and hundreds of activists travelled to France to join protests and counter-conferences.

Since the COP21 conference the environmental movement has continued to develop. Internationally a major focus has been protests against the building of pipelines in North America. The struggle at Standing Rock by the Native American communities and their supporters is an inspirational one that has helped focus on the failings of Obama's administration over the question of climate. Donald Trump's climate denial is frightening, as he has already committed to diverting resources from NASA's climate research towards "non-political science".

Trump's opponent, Hillary Clinton, while admitting the serious nature of climate change was a firm supporter of fracking and the fossil fuel industry. However this should not hide the extent to which Trump's Presidency is likely to see a significant shift away from a willingness to take action on climate change. While the Presidential debates ignored climate change, this contrasts with the importance that the issue had among many voters. Bernie Sanders made it a key part of his bid for the Democratic candidature saying it was the biggest threat to US security. Clinton was forced to engage with the issue as a result, even saying she would "put a lot of coal miners and coal companies out of business." Once Sanders was out of the running though, Clinton dropped climate change and rarely engaged with the issue. This contrasts massively with the way that the issue remains crucial for many activists, and a growing US environmental movement which is currently focused on Standing Rock.

The SWP should be proud of its role

within the UK climate movement. In particular, we have helped shape the movement through building links between environmentalists and trade unionists. The One Million Climate Jobs campaign continues to be a touch stone for the union movement in the UK and in a growing number of countries.

At this year's TUC conference we held an official Climate Jobs fringe meeting which followed a crucial debate on Heathrow expansion the previous day. The TSSA had proposed a radical motion calling for the TUC to oppose airport expansion, and while this was lost, it provoked what many have called the first serious debate at the TUC on the question of jobs versus the environment. This was reflected in a serious discussion at the fringe meeting, resulting in new networks of activists and union officials. In universities and elsewhere the question of divestment from the fossil fuel industry is a major issue and there have been successful campaigns over this at SOAS and Glasgow.

Going forward, a key question for the environmental movement in Britain will be fracking. So far the movement has been very successful, particularly with mobilisations in the north-west which ensured that Lancashire Council rejected fracking planning applications.

The decision by the government to overturn this democratic decision sets a dangerous precedent. But it has also provided the focus for renewed mobilisations, including recently a large trade union backed protest in Manchester of 2000 activists.

The victimisation of leading fracking campaigner Tina Rothery, who is being charged with contempt of court and faces eviction costs of over £50,000 or two weeks in prison is also generating wider anger. Big protests have already taken place in her support and another will take place at the next hearing on December 9th in Preston.

Fracking is likely to become a major issue in many parts of the UK – with around 10,000 square miles potentially earmarked, particularly in the north-west and north-east, as well as the south coast. There are wide-spread existing networks of activists who are already getting mobilised.

Experience shows that anti-fracking campaigns do not always begin with environmental issues. Communities are often worried about massively increased traffic, damage to roads and infrastructure, house-prices and pollution.

The question of climate change (and issues such as local democracy) are also important and environmental campaigners and the wider left can help bring this into the campaigns.

The OMCJ pamphlet is an incredibly useful tool for this as it offers a concrete alternative to fracking through the creation of sustainable jobs. Comrades should ensure they use this as part of engaging with fracking campaigns. When taking an anti-fracking motion to trades coun-

cils or union branches it is also helpful if the OMCJ has been debated and adopted beforehand.

SWP members have also argued to try and develop wider links between the climate movement and other social issues. We were part of a Campaign Against Climate Change (CaCC) protest outside the US embassy highlighting Trump's climate failings in November. We have also argued that the CaCC should mobilise locally for the protests on the day of Trump's inauguration.

On December 10th there will be widespread "All we want for Christmas is climate action" protests across the UK. In Manchester this is being linked with a refugee demonstration. On February 11th there will be a major conference jointly organised by the CaCC trade union group and the union movement, and environmental groups on "climate refugees, the climate crisis and population displacement: Building a trade union and civil society response."

The SWP is also trying to develop a wider revolutionary analysis of environmental disaster. We have republished Martin Empson's "Marxism & Ecology" pamphlet and over the past few years our publications have carried important articles on issues such as the climate movement, species extinction, food and agriculture and the Anthropocene.

At Marxism 2016 US Marxist ecologist John Bellamy Foster spoke, as did Fracking Campaigner Tina Rothery and Asad Rehman from Friends of the Earth.

The ISJ day school in October was a big success bringing together around 150 people, including the Canadian activist and author Ian Angus. There are big debates taking place with left ecology and the school looked at some of these, as well as wider questions. Comrades should watch and share the videos of the event <https://goo.gl/lsJKO6>

However these theoretical discussions are not limited to the socialist left, they are also of interest to the wider movement. The CaCC trade union group recently held a discussion with Andreas Malm, author of *Fossil Capital*, on the fight for a sustainable world.

The environmental movement will face challenges over the coming years. If right-wing politicians do try to undermine international agreements on climate action then there are likely to be large mobilisations.

Some of these may focus on aspects of environmental destruction, such as tar-sands or fracking, others may be more general. As climate change increasingly becomes a key political question, socialists must try to shape and build these.

FINANCE

Central Committee

The question of our political impact and growth is inseparable from the question of our finances. To meet the demands of the moment we need above all a sound and growing subs base, and that will be the target of a subs drive in the New Year.

The subs drive is a priority for every branch and district, and its success in raising our stable income will be an important factor in determining what we can do in 2017.

Every branch needs to choose someone to lead the subs drive, and to have them in place by our conference. It is an important and responsible task.

Our income figures are fairly stable compared to last year. It is encouraging that the percentage of new recruits on subs continues to rise slowly, and that the overall drop in subs over the last year is half that of the year before.

However, there clearly remains a lot to do during the subs drive if we are to reverse the year on year drop in income from regular subs. There are two important factors here, and branches need to take them as seriously as any other aspect of the fight for a well-functioning and thriving branch.

The first is to ask everyone who joins to pay subs and to pay a reasonable amount. Too often the question of money is still not taken seriously when people join, which allows bad habits to set in.

It is significant that only 1 in 20 people who joined over the last two years have donated to the Appeal. It is hard to believe that so many people who made a decision to join a revolutionary party and fight for socialism are not prepared to give even a small amount to support Socialist Worker.

It is much more likely that they have been allowed to drift from the branch, with no-one sitting them down and discussing the connection between politics and the paper. This should be corrected as a matter of urgency.

The second task is to address the low level of subs of those who have been in the Party for a few years now. A pint of beer a week, depending on the area will cost around £15 per month. Going to a 90 minute football game will set you back around £50. It is not unreasonable to ask someone in a full time job to pay £30 or £40 per month, and those who have been active in the Party for several years can probably raise their contribution a little more.

It is becoming apparent to many people that what we do matters. We cannot rise to the demands of the occasion without every member of the Party taking the question of money very seriously. That tradition has been won before and we need to win it again.

Recent years have been tough from a financial point of view. The overwhelming issue is a low level of industrial action

which makes the option of working class self-activity look less attractive.

Combined with the very real effects of austerity on the incomes of students and young workers, the downward pressure on subs has made it difficult to employ the number of organisers we would like, and has also meant careful prioritising about where we intervene.

However our income is not simply an objective issue at the mercy of external forces. That the Party's placards, leaflets and paper are seen at every significant protest or picket line is testament to the fact that a core of comrades make regular and substantial contributions to the Party through monthly subs and to Socialist Worker through donations to the Appeal.

We need to fight for this commitment at every level of the Party, as part of a political discussion about the politics of the period and the role of the Party.

Every branch that has recruited will be familiar with the question of retention of new members. Elsewhere we have argued 'People are far more likely to remain members of the SWP if they feel the organisation, and they themselves, are playing an active role in transforming the world as well as deepening their own understanding of what is a very turbulent time.'

A crucial part of new members feeling an active member of the Party is through the payment of subs.

If we neglect this aspect, not only do we deny the Party a major source of income, but we send completely the wrong message to new members about how important they are, and how important what we do is.

Here are the average monthly subs paid by subs paying members according to length of membership:

Less than 5 years	£10
5-10 years.....	£20
10-20 years.....	£31
Over 20 years.....	£43

The final average figure hides a big variation, from those making regular three figure contributions to those who have now retired and substantially reduced their subs.

The following charts show our income and expenditure over the last year, any comrade requiring further information should contact the Finance Office.

Income

The chart on the top right shows income streams as a percentage of the total income of the Party. Comrades who require further information may contact the finance office.

Membership subs and Marxism sales have risen slightly as a percentage, whilst the Appeal is slightly down as a percentage. The Appeal is ongoing and we hope to reach our target by February.

To do this each branch needs to raise around 10% of what they have raised so far. Most branches will realise that there are still comrades who usually pay and have

not been asked, new members who do not know about the Appeal, or non-members who might donate using the collection sheet, especially work colleagues and people we see in SUTR activity.

Every branch should make sure they have a well-planned social if they have not already done so.

We have also said elsewhere that we think there is great potential to increase sales of the paper, which would also of course boost our income. It is also important to send paper money in promptly.

Expenditure

The chart on the bottom right shows expenditure in each area as a percentage of total expenditure.

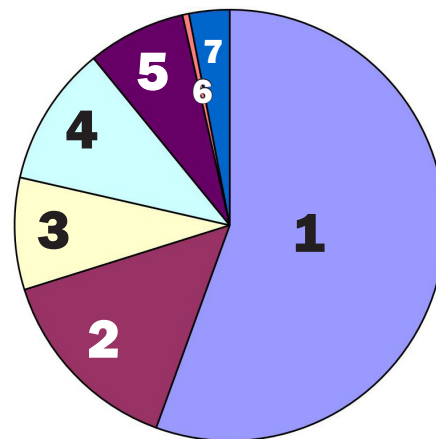
Wages have declined slightly as a percentage of costs. Partly this is due to departments responding to the decline in subs discussed above. In some cases people have stopped working for the Party for personal reasons and not yet been replaced.

The biggest increase in our expenditure has been in office overheads. Some of this is due to increases in electricity, phone and other bills, but by far the biggest element is an increase in rates that has hit us quite hard, although we have been able to negotiate a reduction from the original demand.

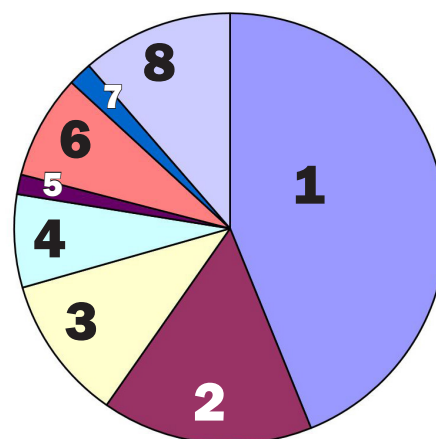
After a year where we more or less broke even, we are looking at a moderate loss this year, largely due to the increase in overheads mentioned above. We believe this can be turned around with a relentless focus on pushing up subs and sales. The potential exists in this turbulent political moment to do both of those things.

Finally, the Party benefits from time to time from generous bequests left by comrades. Unfortunately the last wishes of comrades are not always made clear, and sometimes money that was intended to be left to the Party does not reach us.

We are looking at ways to make the process of leaving money to the Party easier, meanwhile a form of words to insert into your will is available from the finance office.



Income	%
1. Membership subs	55.5
2. Publication subs	14.6
3. Publications sales	8.4
4. SW Appeal	10.5
5. Marxism ticket sales	7.4
6. Donations	0.5
7. Other	3.1



Expenditure	%
1. Wages	43.88
2. Office overheads	15.81
3. Publication production	10.88
4. Marxism 2016	6.99
5. Marxism 2015	1.48
6. Venues and travel	7.83
7. Loans repaid	1.79
8. Publication distribution	11.35

THE CENTENARY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Central Committee

The coming year marks the centenary of the single most important event in the revolutionary socialist tradition—the 1917 Revolution in Russia.

The revolution remains the only instance of workers establishing their own state on a national scale. Despite its international isolation and ultimate reversal by Stalinist counter-revolution in the 1920s, it stands as a testament to what a socialist society can aspire to even in dire economic circumstances.

To give just one example, it is worth remembering, as Donald Trump threatens to roll back abortion rights in the US, that as early as December 1920, in the wake of a spate of illegal abortions, the Soviet government resolved: “To permit such operations to be made freely and without any charge in Soviet hospitals, where conditions are assured of minimising the harm of the operation.”

The revolutionary year also offers insights into the relationship between mass upsurges of struggle and the role of revolutionary organisations such as the Bolsheviks, a relationship discussed in Leon Trotsky’s classic book-length treatment: *The History of the Russian Revolution*. These lessons continue to hold relevance in later rebellions such as the Arab revolutions of 2011.

In the past, the legacy of 1917 was defended by two quite different traditions. On the one hand, there was a Stalinist defence, which saw the state capitalist regime that emerged from the 1920s as the fulfilment of the potential of the revolution. On the other hand, there were those emerging from the Trotskyist tradition, who saw the rise of Stalin as a betrayal of the revolution’s promise.

The Stalinist left has declined considerably following the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries. However, those forces, including the SWP, who would like to reclaim the genuine revolutionary tradition of 1917 are also relatively scarce within the broader radical left movement. It is important, therefore, to think through how best we can use the anniversary to patiently explain the significance of the events in Russia and their relevance in a much-transformed capitalist world a hundred years later.

Celebrating 1917

For the anniversary of the October Revolution itself (which took place on 7–8 November according to the modern calendar), we plan to hold a one-day event on 4 November 1917 in central London entitled “Celebrating 1917”. We will encourage all members, nationally, to attend and to bring sympathetic non-members to this event.

Given the fragmentary nature of the left today and the contested view of 1917 (the Communist Party plan to hold their own event, as do various smaller left groupings) it is unlikely that there will be a single, unified left event marking the centenary.

Instead we have to try to use our one-day conference to engage in discussion and debate to draw out the lessons of the revolution. Steve Smith, author of *Red Petrograd: Revolution in the Factories, 1917–1918*, has already agreed to speak, as has Alexander Kollontai’s biographer, Cathy Porter.

Sessions at the conference will discuss the liberatory aspect of the revolution, including its impact on culture and on the family, the nature of the Bolshevik party, the contemporary relevance of Leninism and meaning of 1917 today. This event will be the culmination of a year of events marking 1917.

Other events

To mark the February Revolution we plan to hold a number of regional rallies, including one in central London, with the theme “1917: a workers’ revolution and a festival of the oppressed” in February/March 2017.

In areas not covered by these rallies, branches can hold public meetings. Because of the business of this period—in the run up to the 18 March anti-racism demonstration there will be Stand Up To Racism rallies in all areas of the country—branches should coordinate with the national office over the timing, format and speakers.

There are a number of books that Bookmarks hope to publish in time for spring 2017. The first, a graphic novel of the revolution by Tim Sanders and John Newsinger is already on sale.

In addition, Dave Sherry is working on a short book on the revolution and Emma Davis is writing a *Rebel’s Guide* to Alexander Kollontai. These authors can also be used on the platforms of our rallies and public meetings to help launch and promote their books.

Then, in July, Marxism 2017 will feature extensive discussion of the revolution. There will be an opportunity for comrades to make suggestions for the Marxism timetable early in 2017.

Discussion of the revolution is likely to be most intense in October/November 2017, so, as well as the Celebrating 1917 event, districts should hold their own rally or public meeting in mid to late October.

This is particularly timely as the universities will have just returned by then, offering us a particularly important audience for our ideas about the revolution, and where it is possible we should aim to hold these in university venues or venues close to campus.

Given the likely intensity of discussion of the revolution, it might be useful to consider some educational meetings on

1917, aimed in particular at those newer to our tradition. Some titles and reading for these will be suggested on the SWP educational page: swp.org.uk/education/

1917 in our publications

Finally, all three publications plan to mark the revolution. *Socialist Review* will have an article each month covering key aspects of the revolution, such as the democratic nature of 1917, the origins of the united front and so on. *Socialist Worker* will have a weekly timeline of the revolution, along with historical and theoretical articles.

International Socialism is planning a range of major articles to appear over the coming year, including a piece by Alex Callinicos on the significance of 1917 today, articles on cultural explosion that followed 1917, the revolution’s anti-colonial impact, Jewish workers and the revolution, and more.

ECONOMIC GROWTH, REFORMISM AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE – GAPS IN OUR PERSPECTIVES?

Richard

Consider these facts about the UK economy and private sector pay deals¹:-

- Britain’s car industry achieved record exports in 2012.²
- Britain’s car industry achieved record exports again in 2015 beating the previous 2012 record.³
- British car manufacturing hit a 16-year high in the first half of 2016, The UK automotive manufacturing sector has grown dramatically over the past few years and now employs 169,000 people.⁴
- The UK aerospace sector grew by 9.4% in 2013 and on average by 7.1% each year since 2008.⁵
- The average salary in the aerospace industry in 2014 was £41,000 per annum.⁶
- In 2014 UK manufacturing output was \$247 billion, the 9th highest in the world.⁷

¹ All pay figures from Unite the Union, based on highest 2015 RPI figure of 1.2%

² <http://www.automotivecouncil.co.uk/2013/01/uk-car-manufacturing-achieves-all-time-record-exports-in-2012/>

³ <http://www.smmmt.co.uk/2016/01/best-year-in-a-decade-for-british-car-manufacturing-as-exports-reach-record-high/>

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/jul/28/uk-car-manufacturing-hits-high-industry-warns-brexiteffect>

⁵ The aerospace industry: statistics and policy 2015 in www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/sn00928.pdf

⁶ The aerospace industry: statistics and policy 2015 in www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/sn00928.pdf

⁷ <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN05809>

- UK GDP has grown by 14.65% since 2009 and for 19 out of the last 20 years⁸ (albeit four of those years were recovery from the 2008-9 recession)
- In construction the Unite electricians have just negotiated a national 4 year pay deal of between 12% and 16%.

UNITE SECTOR	No of bargaining units	% of bargaining units that got better than RPI	% of bargaining units that got at least double* RPI
Aerospace	324	86%	38%
Automotives	517	81%	49%
Chemicals	499	57%	27%
Food	976	78%	54%

* With a low RPI rate, doubling or more than doubling it should not get us too excited but it is clearly better than a defeat.

Economy: a 'Long Depression'?

Michael Roberts's theory of "The Long Depression" is presented in the paper, review, ISJ and Marxism without caveats. This creates the impression to members and non-members that his analysis is ours.

*"These effects have been greatly reinforced by what the Marxist blogger Michael Roberts calls the Long Depression that started in 2007-8."*⁹

*"Michael Roberts has contended both in this journal and on his blog that global capitalism is caught in what he calls the 'long depression'"*¹⁰

I subscribe to his blog. It is useful on the Declining Rate of Profit. But his arguments require more than the uncritical reception our party gives them. My criticisms are threefold:-

1) Terminological: -

a) In the UK labour movement the term "The Long Depression" summons up images of the 1930s. This is not where the UK economy is and we need to drop this term. Words matter. We argue against those who call UKIP "Fascist" because they aren't and the misuse of the term disarms us against the real thing. Likewise with describing a period of economic growth as a "Depression".

2) Theoretical: -

a) Michael doesn't accept the theory of the Permanent Arms Economy as explaining the long boom. Yet the Permanent Arms Economy has not gone away. Though it has declined as a percentage of World GDP¹¹, in real value terms it has increased almost every year since 1998¹² and now stands at

\$1676 billion. (The world economy has expanded faster than arms expenditure.) It is still a counter-veiling tendency to the declining rate of profit, even if weaker than in the 1950s. Michael's failure to accept this encourages a more catastrophic understanding than reality justifies.

b) He supports the Long Wave theory first developed by Kondratieff, (see the latest ISJ¹³). Chris Harman was right to see no value whatsoever in these theories¹⁴.

3) Practical:-

a) The figures about UK manufacturing that I quoted earlier appear nowhere in Michael's work or talks. He is an economist working in the UK, who seems not to notice the UK car industry boom and the UK aerospace industry growth. For an interventionist party this is an unacceptable gap in analysis.

b) I have spent the last 8 years on a Unite regional committee alongside stewards from the car and aerospace industries. (Who all signed the SUTU¹⁵ petition.) When shop stewards in the Aerospace and Car industry tell me that their workplaces are booming, do I argue with them that they are wrong because Michael Roberts says it's a Long Depression? Do we no longer "listen to the class"? Chris Harman's Zombie Capitalism describes the current period as "The New Age of Global Instability". This far more accurately reflects the unevenness of the current period.

My 2015 IB1 article¹⁶ argued that "We are seeing a restructuring of capitalism in response to the decline in the rate of profit, which produces crises in some industries in some locations (e.g. British Coal) or in some locations (e.g. Greece) but also massive growth elsewhere e.g. China or the UK car industry".

The Long Depression theory might make sense to workers in Greece or Ireland. It will make no sense to workers in Australia, where GDP has grown every single year this century including 2008.¹⁷ And little sense to workers in the UK car and aerospace industries.

We have to develop a theory which explains both Australia and Greece, both the 631,000 UK public sector job losses¹⁸ and UK car industry boom with its resultant job vacancies¹⁹.

And we have to develop perspectives that account for both crisis and growth because this is what the class is experiencing. It is time to apply our theory of combined and uneven development not just to what was once called the third world, but also to the UK.

The balance of forces

The lack of *visible* workplace struggle co-existing alongside various political "upturns" over the last 20 years has disoriented our tendency. But it only does so if the low level of struggle is interpreted as a defeat.

Since 2011 I have highlighted that one explanation for this low level of strikes is that the ballot process allows the employers to avoid disputes when they suspect they are going to lose. I repeated this in ISJ 149.²⁰ Perhaps I have won this argument, see this SW article.²¹ *But this cannot be an aside to the perspective. It is crucial to it.* Look at the figures for pay rises at the start of this article. This is not a beaten working class;-

*"We have **not** gone through a period of permanent defeat ever since the signal workers' qualified victory of 1994. Instead we've been in a period where sometimes we win, sometimes they win and sometimes it's a draw... the sharp rise in income inequality which took place from 1974 to 1991 effectively paused in this period; the Gini coefficient—a measure of inequality—was at 0.24 in 1979 and rose to 0.34 in 1991. It has fluctuated around that level since then such that in 2014 the Gini coefficient level was still at 0.34."*²²

*For the 12 years from 1996 to 2008 trade union membership stabilised around 6.9 to 7 million until the recession of 2008 caused it to fall by 7 percent to 6.4 million.²³ It has now stabilised at 6.5 million.²⁴ If we discount the impact of the recession, trade union membership has been stable for the last 20 years."*²⁵

The reason the left is interpreting the lack of struggle as a defeat is because we are looking at the economy through the lens of crisis i.e. "we're in crisis, then the employers must be attacking, so the low level of struggle is a sign of defeat." My idea of "ballot victories" depends not just upon workplace organisation to deliver it but also on the employers having the ability to pay. The fact that they can afford to pay contradicts the "catastrophic" theorists.

Comrades at various Marxism meetings on unions evidenced either "ballot victories" or victories won after just one day's strike action²⁶ or limited campaigning²⁷. These support my thesis. I cannot see this experience being integrated into our perspectives.

²⁰ <http://isj.org.uk/strikes-ballots-and-the-class-struggle-addition/>

²¹ <https://socialistworker.co.uk/art/43202/Latest+strike+figures+show+a+drop+-+but+they+dont+tell+the+whole+story>

²² Go to www.equalitytrust.org.uk/how-has-inequality-changed

²³ Go to www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/313768/bis-14-p77-trade-union-membership-statistical-bulletin-2013.pdf

²⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/525938/Trade_Union_Membership_2015_-_Statistical_Bulletin.pdf

²⁵ <http://isj.org.uk/strikes-ballots-and-the-class-struggle-addition/>

²⁶ <https://socialistworker.co.uk/art/42388/Victory+for+striking+Scottish+Further+Education+lecturers>

²⁷ E.g. Plans to make 84 Prudential staff redundant in Reading were withdrawn just before two 24 hour strikes were about to begin <http://www.uniteheunion.org/uploaded/documents/Finance%20bulletin%20September%20201611-28497.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/timeseries/abmi/pn2>

⁹ <https://socialistworker.co.uk/art/43681/We+dont+want+Trump+but+neither+do+the+bosses>

¹⁰ <http://isj.org.uk/intimations-of-mortality/> ISJ 150

¹¹ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS>

¹² <http://books.sipri.org/files/FS/SIPRI1604.pdf>

¹³ <http://isj.org.uk/real-capitalism-turbulent/>

¹⁴ Chris Harman 'Explaining the Crisis' pages 132-136. Comrades should read this themselves rather than take my word for it.

¹⁵ Stand Up To UKIP

¹⁶ 2015 IB1 "What went wrong?"

¹⁷ <http://www.rba.gov.au/chart-pack/au-gdp-growth.html>

¹⁸ <http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/public-sector-jobs-lost>

¹⁹ <http://www.smmt.co.uk/2016/02/5000-jobs-vacant-in-uk-automotive-due-to-skills-shortage/>

Real wage decline?

So how does the above relate to the TUC's report of a 10% decline in real wages? 28 The 10% decline is an average figure that takes no account of differences between organised and un-organised workers.

So our analysis of the general situation as being one of volatile anger, alienation and frustration is correct.

But we have to be more targeted than this in our analysis of the industrial situation. Unite the union presents the following figures on the highest trade union premiums for one year:-

SECTOR	ONS** Median % pay rise	Unite median % pay rise	Unite premium
Automotive	-0.1	3.0	3.1
Civil Air Transport	-4.6	2.2	6.8
Print and IT	-1.2	2.2	3.4
Passenger Services	-0.8	2.5	3.3
Metals	0.7	3.0	2.3
** Office of National Statistics			

These figures suggest that it's quite probable for organised workers in the private sector to be experiencing a different real wage story to the rest of the class. This helps explain the support for Unite's leadership, because on the whole they are delivering enough to the private sector.

Political trade unionism

Political trade unionism has to include as centre stage the politics of why the workplace is fundamental.

We need to patiently argue with activists why they need to take their protest into work and how to do that. This will be a difficult argument and people will need careful help on how to organise at work. But this has to be a central part of our perspective not an adjunct.

This is an important argument that we need to have with the rest of the left and beyond, an argument which the low level of visible class struggle makes more difficult and more necessary. This does not mean we should duck it.

We need to stress rebuilding at the section level because for most activists that's all that's most readily available to them.

Though accepting the argument in the public sector for national action, I worry that the emphasis on both national action and anti-racism on their own will end up encouraging our comrades to be active in work only over racism/politics whilst propagandising about national action and not looking for the workplace issues on their section.

But issues exist on every section. The left defeated the fascists in the thirties not just by anti-fascism but also by acting on economic issues, (e.g. Resisting evictions

in the East End of London.²⁹) In political terms we need to build both the "It's Our NHS" national demo in London, March 4 as well as the SUTR demo on March 18.

So in work we have to combine anti-racism with picking up on every work issue we can on our sections. This gets a nod in our perspectives, but it needs to be more than that. Germany experienced a revolutionary crisis from 1918 to 1924, with groups of armed workers appearing at various times during this period.

At the KPD congress Rosa Luxemburg argued that for the revolution to progress it had to move from the political to the economic class struggle "It then becomes an economic revolution, and therewith a socialist revolution."³⁰ If it's good enough for Rosa Luxemburg at a time of revolution, it's surely good enough for the SWP in our non-revolutionary times?

Economic growth and reformism

Economic growth provides the material basis for reformism. "The trade union and Labour Party bureaucracy are effective in disciplining the working class in the long run only to the extent that the economic conditions of the workers themselves are tolerable. In the final analysis the base of Reformism is in capitalist prosperity."³¹

Our "crisis" spectacles have prevented us from debating the impact of economic growth on our perspectives. I cannot remember us discussing the impact of economic growth on the UK class struggle this century. Can you? Yet economic growth has been a more consistent feature of the world³² and UK economy than crisis over the last 20 years.

Reforms come from one of the following four things:-

- 1) Pressure from the working class
- 2) The needs of capitalism itself
- 3) The ability of capitalism to pay for reforms
- 4) And a combination of the above

Of course reforms have to be passed in parliament. This gives the LP the opportunity to argue that they passed X and Y reform. This is just the legal process. The question it begs is "What created the pressure for that reform to be passed?"

In IB1 2015 I reminded the party of reforms passed by New Labour – heating allowance for pensioners, educational maintenance allowance (abolished only in England) and working family and child tax credits. Let's look at tax credits. They cost £30 billion a year.³³ The attempt to abolish

it put the Tories on the back foot.³⁴ This reform fulfilled the following criteria:-

- a) It supports capitalism by increasing family incomes to bring up the next generation of workers
- b) Economic growth means the economy can support this reform
- c) It helped the TU bureaucracy justify its support for the LP

But it existed and exists (in a form) today. It is a reform. If we deny the ability of economic growth to pay for reforms, then we will be continually sideswiped whenever such reforms appear and whenever workers negotiate real improvements at work. This affects the public sector too. Comrades in local government tell me they've managed to stick to voluntary redundancies. After 8 years of Austerity this is an achievement. But it also shows a consequence of economic growth, as a growing economy provides jobs for those volunteers to go to.

If the whole economy had been in crisis then the number of volunteers would have been fewer and the material pressure to resist job cuts greater. This doesn't excuse the role of the trade union bureaucracy. But it explains the behaviour of the rank and file.

Ron Margulies explains the popularity of Erdoğan's AKP in Turkey because "In the period 2003-2014... the Turkish economy grew at an average rate of 4.7 percent annually."³⁵ If that works for Turkey, why not the UK?

If we argue with car workers that the boom they experience is a mirage, then effectively we are arguing to weaken their confidence in their economic ability to oppose their employer. The JLR³⁶ pay deal of 2014 was a good one, giving (amongst many other things) the lowest paid 8.4%.³⁷ Yet 22% of JLR workers voted to reject this deal. As I wrote in 2015 "What has our analysis of "Crisis!" got to offer about their own workplace situation to those 2,766 car workers who looked at their booming employer and chose to reject the union's advice?"³⁸

Tony Cliff

Cliff argued that if the facts didn't fit the analysis then the analysis had to change. I have been arguing since 2011 that our analysis does not fit all of the facts of the situation.

When I pointed to examples of "ballot victories" comrades argued that these were "exceptions". When I point to growth in various industries, comrades argue that these too are "exceptions". What this means is that these facts don't fit our analysis and so by labelling them "exceptions" we can safely ignore them whilst pretending

28 <https://www.tuc.org.uk/economic-issues/labour-market/uk-workers-experienced-sharpest-wage-fall-any-leading-economy-tuc>

29 <http://socialistreview.org.uk/417/day-east-enders-built-barricades>

30 <https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1918/12/31.htm>

31 <https://www.marxists.org/archive/cliff/works/1957/06/rootsref.htm>

32 <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG>

33 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/low-wages-force-britain-to-spend-900m-more-on-tax-credits->

[than-planned-9919035.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/low-wages-force-britain-to-spend-900m-more-on-tax-credits-)

34 http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/question-time-tax-credits-labour_uk_5713b70de4b0f22f0219b956

35 <http://isj.org.uk/what-are-we-to-do-with-islam/>

36 Jaguar Land Rover

37 <http://isj.org.uk/strikes-ballots-and-the-class-struggle-addition/> ISJ 149 page 127

38 2015 IB1 "What went wrong?"

to ourselves that we are sticking to Cliff's method.

Would Cliff have failed to notice the car industry record export booms of 2012 and 2015, or the record car production of this year or the growth in the aerospace sector? Would Cliff, having noticed these facts, have then decided that they should play no part in our industrial and political perspectives? I think not.

Having decided that these industries should play a role in shaping our perspectives, would Cliff have then said "Let's forget about austerity and zero hours contracts and just relate to the workers in the growth industries"? No. He'd have said that we would need perspectives which explained and acted on both growth and austerity. This is what we need to do.

I haven't worked out the complete political consequences of this analysis. The party needs collectively to accept the reality of the nuances of this economic and workplace situation and then together debate and decide the political conclusions.

Our comrades Ann Alexander and Mostafa Bassiouny argue about Egypt³⁹ that it would be wrong to look at the workers movement either through the lens of decline "the ageing power looms in Al-Mahalla al-Kubra" or through the lens of growth "the gleaming car assembly lines in 6th of October City"⁴⁰ but that the correct perspective is to look at both together as "Unevenness and Combination".⁴¹ This is what we need to do for the UK.

BUILDING A SMALL TOWN BRANCH IN THE ERA OF CORBYNISM

James and Lucretia (Chesterfield)

There are serious challenges to building a revolutionary party that is rooted in our workplaces and communities and avoids the twin danger of accommodating to the pull of reformism or retreating into isolated sectarianism. Those challenges can be particularly significant when you are located in a small town without a university.

Chesterfield branch has had some limited and modest success by developing a method of working which combines regular and generally well attended and political branch meetings, regular public campaign

stalls in the town centre, and by attempting to ensure that we have some input and involvement in pretty much everything and anything that happens on the left in the town.

Our regular branch meetings (we advertise these as Socialist Worker Forums) are generally well attended with usually between 15 and 25 attendees. There is normally a good level of discussion and debate, although inevitably this does vary.

We have a tight second half business agenda which will usually consist of a couple of reports of events/ activities / mobilisation we have been or are planning to be involved with.

We produce a weekly What's On bulletin for the meeting which has all of the forthcoming meetings/ events/ mobilisations, and we have a sign up board for the week's coming mobilisations. We regularly have non-members coming to and contributing to our meetings.

We treat all of our meetings as "public meetings" i.e. we produce a good looking flyer which we distribute both electronically and in hard copy. Every now and then we will have an extra push for a particular meeting/ speaker. For example recently we did a very successful booklaunch event of Nicola Field's *Over the Rainbow* to which we pulled a number of local LGBT activists, and representatives of the local official council funded "LGBT+ Derbyshire group" and also young students for the FE college who we were able to recruit.

This has built on a conscious strategy we have had of supporting the newly established Chesterfield Pride event.

We also make an effort on our Saturday Campaign stalls (by the way we don't call these "paper sales" we call them "campaign stalls" because that is what we do). We always try to make sure that the stall looks good with posters & literature, we always have a megaphone and we generally sell quite well, on good weeks 40-50 sometimes down to 15-20.

Although the regulars on our stall are drawn from a relatively limited pool of our membership, we have had some success in getting members who are not able/willing to commit to being there every week to occasionally turn up, and we have had some success in getting new members involved.

We are also pretty scrupulous about getting hold of people's contact details and then keeping in touch with them. Inevitably given the large numbers of contacts involved and the relatively small numbers of active members, this mainly involves emails/ texts/ FB etc. which have their limitations.

However it does mean that several hundred people in our small town do know what we are up to, and it is not uncommon for us to come across people, sometimes several years later, who are on our contact lists and aware of our existence and activities.

We also importantly don't give up on those members who are on our member-

ship list but who we don't see much of. The overwhelming majority of our members will have had some involvement in some activity over the last few months. We also have quite a well-established tradition of doing fundraising social activities around the appeal, for many years we ran successful curry nights and we have had a regular bonfire night fundraiser for the past three years.

There are still of course weaknesses in our work; integrating new members both into activity and into the political traditions of the party is always an issue.

We are thinking about running an educational series in the new year focussed at new members on the some of the basic ideas and traditions - perhaps modelled on the successful ISJ readers group format which we ran over the last year and reported in last year's IB.

Because our branch meetings are quite large, newer members may feel constrained to contribute as much as they might. We do have a functioning branch committee, but don't meet quite as regularly as perhaps we should and it tends to involve the same relatively small group of key comrades.

There isn't really much of an organic social life around the branch, and not really much scope for comrades to simply sit and chat. This is partly reflective of our age profile - our core comrades and activists tend to be older. We have tried to establish a routine of going for a drink after the branch meeting and a coffee after the Saturday sale which gives some space for more general discussion.

We have also over the years established a bit of a pattern of recruitment whereby we will come across and recruit young school and college students, who will then leave Chesterfield to go away to university, and are therefore lost to the branch and in many cases to the party.

We are also about to lose two of our most experienced members who are moving away from Chesterfield, and in a branch with a small core of active members that will be a blow.

With the low level of class struggle our ability to intervene actively in workers' struggle is limited. However we were key to building local support for the Junior Doctors strike earlier in the year and we have had an input into a number of anti-cuts campaigns - school crossing patrols, old peoples' homes and Sure Start centres.

We have a relatively weak implantation in local unionised workplaces, but our members are centrally involved in the local Trades Council and in the Unite Community branch and this gives us an 'in' into a range of trade union related campaign areas.

So we have been involved over the last year or so in the campaign work in our area around Sports Direct with a couple of comrades who live in Shirebrook playing a central role.

Despite the fact that the pace and tempo of the Sports Direct campaign work tends

39 Bread, Freedom and Social Justice - workers and the Egyptian revolution

40 Bread, Freedom and Social Justice - workers and the Egyptian revolution, page 72

41 Bread, Freedom and Social Justice - workers and the Egyptian revolution, page 94. This book should be read by every comrade, but the chapter on "Class in the neo-liberal era" from which these quotes are taken is more important than the authors seem to realise and we should be generalising its lessons to the UK and beyond.

to be set by the Unite bureaucracy, our local standing in the movement has been enhanced by our role in that. More recently we have through the Trades Council also initiated some campaign activity around the issue of a £10 an hour minimum wage.

We are also centrally involved in NHS campaign work locally, and have also had some (limited) involvement in local environmental activism working with other to establish a Chesterfield Climate Alliance and some involvement with local anti-fracking campaigns.

We have also consciously maintained a Stop The War presence, working with some CND, and PSC activists. Although on quite a low level, this has meant that we have been able to do some effective work on related issues such as Palestine solidarity and also a project commemorating local resistance to the First World War. There was also recently a successful public meeting with Lindsey German speaking on the impact of Chilcot.

Momentum and Corbyn: challenges and opportunities:

What has changed for us over the last few months has been the emergence of a local Momentum group in Chesterfield and North Derbyshire.

This has created a new situation for us because for a long time now (with the exception of a very sporadic and generally very weak presence from the Socialist Party) we have been the only left group in town.

The emergence of Momentum has meant that we have had to adapt tactically, and be more conscious of focusing on the twin track strategy of building united front activity and retaining our political clarity.

The key to this has been through our work in Stand Up To Racism where we have consciously and with some success pulled some of the key figures in and around Momentum and the Labour Party into working with us.

During the height of the Corbyn campaign in the summer it sometimes felt as we might have been on the margins of what was a significant mood which pulled directly towards the Labour Party.

However we made sure we had good and visible interventions, both as the SWP and through United Front initiatives at the big Corbyn events in our area.

The fact that these were successful interventions, not only helped us give confidence to our own members but also meant that we were reaching out to a wide milieu of people who were drawn to Corbyn.

It is also clear that the Momentum/pro-Corbyn project which seemed so hegemonic in Corbyn's "summer of love" is far more problematic in the cold reality of a hostile and entrenched right wing within the local Labour party and significant

internal tensions within the Momentum milieu about strategy and tactics.

This means that Momentum meetings are often quite fractious and internalised affairs. It is also the case that we regularly come across new Labour Party members who have had pretty awful experiences when they have turned up to their local Labour Party meetings wanting to get involved.

It is important that we get the tone right when we talk with these people. We have to avoid any sense of revolutionary purity and superiority, but we do need to make clear that we have an offer to make to them:

- 1) Involvement with them in a range of relevant united front campaign work on key issues which are part of the general Corbyn plan (SUTR/ NHS Defence/ £10 an hour etc.).
- 2) Interesting and relevant political meetings which raise and debate the key issue which anyone on the left is interested in whether this is Trump, Castro Climate change etc.
- 3) A serious but fraternal debate with them about the strategy and tactics that the whole of the left needs to adopt if Corbyn is to succeed.
- 4) A revolutionary alternative to reformism.

There is not necessarily a strict linear progression through these steps, it does not mean that we hold off step 4, popping the question about joining, until we have exhausted steps 1,2, and 3.

However it is our experience that we can have considerable traction in winning numbers of Labour Party members to step 1 and by doing that, it keeps us in the game.

Stand up to Racism – a key shift

One of the crucial ways we have managed to relate to the mood around Corbyn has been through Stand Up To Racism and solidarity with refugees in particular.

Before this year we have had some local profile for Stand Up To Racism. We had a couple of effective SUTR meetings in 2014 and 2015 which had broad platforms including the (Labour) leader of Derbyshire County Council. We mobilised for the national SUTR demos in 2014 and 2015. We had also held a couple of "Love Music Hate Racism" gigs including one in autumn 2015 which paid for a caravan to be placed in Calais refugee camp.

However until this summer in effect SUTR had really only been a "label" through which we did some anti-racist work. We shifted this around the time of the Calais Convoy when a genuine SUTR group was really kick started. This showed the importance of national initiatives in galvanising the localities.

A new member declared in the branch meeting she wanted to go to Calais and that made us move! We have very few active trade unionists in our branch but four members did successful collections in their workplaces: lecturers at the college, midwives and social workers at the hospital and at a voluntary sector workplace. Also individual supporters who we have known for years were approached.

We raised over £1000 and collected carloads of toiletries. The Labour mayor and some Lib Dem councillors were amongst the 40 or so who attended the 'send off' from the town hall. A Labour party member wrote a song about refugees which was sung by a comrade.

We set up monthly meetings which have been well attended and some leading Momentum supporters locally have become centrally involved. We took a minibus to SUTR Conference, 60 people (far more than we expected) came to Chesterfield station to support the Dubs Amendment, 50 to a public meeting, and 100 to a Rock for Refugees gig.

We also have been collecting winter clothing for refugees on behalf of Derbyshire Refugee Solidarity. We applied to have a Stand Up To Racism stall at Chesterfield College Freshers Fair and the NUS president has become involved.

Also as Derbyshire and Chesterfield was to host to a small number of refugee families, we started an open letter, welcoming the refugees to the area, to be published in the local newspaper, the Derbyshire Times. This Open Letter was used at all the above events, at a local music festival and also by Momentum supporters at the big Labour Leadership hustings meeting, where even our right wing MP signed.

All this activity has drawn non-members to our branch meetings. Many of them are new recruits to the Labour Party, but they do not find either Momentum or Labour party meetings very habitable and much prefer the politics and atmosphere in our branch!

It is true to say that our recruitment dried up once the coup happened, the pull to get Corbyn re-elected was strong. However in November we have signed up three new members all under 19, one cancelled her sub to Labour to join.

On balance the past 12 months have been a positive experience for us. Building and sustaining an effective branch which can also look outward and lead and intervene is hard work... it doesn't just happen.

But the key lesson we have learned is that despite the challenges of the period, whenever we "push out" and engage we meet people who are responsive to what we are trying to do and interested in our ideas.

THE SWP AND STUDENTS

Lewis (student office)

It's worth reporting on how the party's student work has continued since the CC document in the last IB. As the document correctly identified, there is somewhat of a contradiction on campuses. This is between a big audience for politics and socialist ideas, combined with a general lack of a student movement, or of an organised left and activist base on most campuses.

A good indication of this was the UCU & NUS 'United for Education' demo on 19 November. The past year has seen big numbers of students join Labour to support Corbyn, Left wing officers elected to national positions (such as Malia Bouattia and Shelly Asquith) and flashpoints of resistance such as the UCL rent strike.

However the demo – which concretely campaigned for free education, a Corbyn policy – wasn't as big as organisers may have hoped.

The demo was by no means a failure, but it is illustrative of a situation where politicisation on campus has not crystallised into an increase in student struggle. How the party fits into this situation is not easy and requires some thought.

Our perspective for students can be summarised as having 3 main components: focus on anti-racism, including initiatives called for by Student Stand Up To Racism; build SWSS where we can; and the retention and development of student members.

It goes without saying that SWSS members will also be involved in wider campaigns where we can including against planned tuition fee rises, BDS and Palestine solidarity, rent strikes, local strikes and so on.

1. Building an anti racist movement

It's not much of an exaggeration to say racism is the issue around which large numbers of young people are becoming radicalised at the moment.

Racism on campus has been felt sharply, from Prevent to the attacks on EU students and staff. Student Stand Up To Racism has attempted to be the vehicle to challenge this in universities and colleges.

Around 200 students attended the student session at SUTR conference. Since then, a number of SUTR groups have developed.

Manchester SUTR student group regularly has 15-20 students (including the Islamic society, SWSS, Labour members and other groups) at their organising meetings, and held a rally of 50+ students in November. Essex SUTR group has regular organising meetings with Green Party and Labour members, and held a public meeting of 32. Sheffield Hallam SUTR student group

have organised a SUTR petition against Prevent on campus.

Nationally, Student SUTR organised a student coach on the winter delegation to Calais, including 53 students from universities from Southampton to Sheffield. Students have also been involved in SUTR initiatives off campus, such as the big rallies that have taken place in October and November.

Although modest, these local and national initiatives have brought together forces much wider than the SWP into SUTR student groups, and have been met by a positive response on campus.

The key challenge will be how Student SUTR can develop and expand these networks in the mobilisations for the Trump protests in January and the 18 March demo next year, as well responding to the racist flashpoints that will no doubt arise.

Every local SUTR group should hold an organising meeting on campus in the first week of term, where they invite student union officers, Islamic societies and so on.

The local Trump protests on 20 January give us a chance to mobilise students as soon as term starts again. SUTR will be building for M18 mobilising rallies on campuses, and should hold student rallies on campus afterwards if possible. SUTR will also be approaching student unions to put on coaches for the demo.

Overall, the work undertaken by Student SUTR this term has provided a basis on which to build for next year, by working with student unions, Islamic societies, MEND, Labour Party members and other wider forces.

2. SWSS

Mainstream politics is in a state of flux. An 18 year old fresher has experienced a political life dominated by turmoil – the Iraq war, the financial crash, the Arab Spring, the rise of racism, the election of Corbyn, and most recently, the shocking election of Trump.

This means there are big political questions and a big audience for socialist ideas on campus. SWSS meetings at our key SWSS groups – Bristol, University College London, Queen Mary's London, Kingston, Sheffield Hallam, Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow – have regularly been some of the biggest weekly political meetings on campus each week.

For example, in the week after Trump's election, we had 34 students at Queen Mary's SWSS meeting, 32 at Manchester, 24 at UCL and 20 at Kingston.

However, it's also been encouraging to see branches set up SWSS meetings at places where we haven't met that regularly. For example, the first South Bank uni SWSS meeting of the term on Trump drew 13 students. At Birmingham City Uni SWSS first meeting of the term, 11 students came with 4 joining the party. Bolton branch has had 8 and 9 respectively at the two SWSS meetings they've held on campus (at a uni with little else going on politically.)

The focus for the new term will be to

continue these ideological meetings alongside SUTR activity, and to develop SWSS groups into self-organising groups. This requires the development of our student members.

3. Retention and development

Activity and holding meetings is one part of the story. Retention and development of student members is more difficult.

Education and theoretical development is a key part of this. Given the low level of struggle and the contested political terrain of university campuses, it's crucial we provide our new members with ways to engage with our politics and tradition. So far we've attempted to do this in a number of ways:

- The Students and New Members Day School (which will take place on 18 February this year) was a big success last year. Not only did it encourage new members to engage with our politics at a higher level, but it also gave branches an opportunity to build a national event with the periphery we have built around us through activity on campuses.
- As the piece in IB2 outlined in more detail, the London Young Members caucus has provided a regular space for new and student members to discuss our ideas in more depth, and to help shape our political work in the capital. We are planning replicate this with a Northern caucus.
- The educational series on the Labour Party and reformism has been important in encouraging our newer members to grapple with the era of Corbynism, especially in districts outside of London.
- The Capital reading groups has offered an opportunity to discuss Marx's theory at a more advanced level
- Educational events like the Transgender day school and the one off event on cultural appropriation have been important in addressing some of the popular arguments on campuses, and have brought together newer members with more long-standing cadre.

These initiatives have been important in providing education for our members, and will continue in the New Year. It's also worth noting that we're planning a series of educational and public events to mark the centenary of the Russian Revolution.

However, when it comes to developing a new layer of leadership within the party, a key aspect of this is integrating students into our branches and the wider party.

It's difficult to win students to the SWP if they only experience student politics, or see SWSS as a discussion group on campus.

Branch meetings can offer a higher level of politics than a SWSS meeting, concrete intervention in the local area, and the sense of being part of a national organ-

isation that makes a difference.

Indeed, many of our key student members this year have come through local branches, which is testament to the work branches have done in maintaining a regular presence at their local university or college. Education is important, but not in an abstract sense. It should play a role alongside activity.

At Queen Mary's (QM), we have recruited 15 students to the SWP since the start of the term. A big part of this is because a number of the newer comrades at QM have been at every Tower Hamlets branch meeting since the start of term, and have played a key role in the Whitechapel Friday night sale.

In Manchester, the city centre branch meeting regularly has students at it, and student comrades play a role in weekend SWP interventions.

Manchester and QM brought 12 and 9 students respectively on the SUTR coach to Calais.

Both these SWSS groups have adopted strategy of combining continued activity around SUTR with ideological development in SWSS meetings, branches and party educational initiatives.

We should be encouraging new members to read our literature and take part in educational events, but we also need to think about how we can get them to play leading role in our SWSS groups and branches.

For student members to feel confident in intervening around debates in the movement – from privilege theory to Corbynism – they need a sound theoretical grounding but also a practical experience of the party shaping resistance locally.

Selling SW in the city centre, doing SWP campaigning stalls and intervening on picket lines and at demos is incredibly important in terms of political development – it means new members identify as socialists and have to respond to arguments in the concrete, not the abstract.

The student experience is one of a contested ideological terrain alongside a low level of struggle. The politicisation is most sharply felt around racism, in the form of the EU referendum, Trump, UKIP and the rise of the far right across Europe.

Building anti-racist networks of students around SUTR initiatives will be crucial in resisting this on campus.

We will also need to respond to the sparks and struggles that will no doubt arise against austerity, in support of Palestine, in defence of Corbyn and so on.

In the process we need to think about how we can develop our student members to play a leading role both theoretically and in our branches, SWSS groups and political interventions.

ON STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

Chris N (Kingston)

Corbynism rose out of the movements against austerity, war and racism. It has produced a new layer of students who are interested in Socialist politics.

Students have taken part in large numbers in recent anti-racist movements, particularly refugee solidarity and Black Lives Matter. Opposition to Islamophobia and anti-migrant racism are also important topics of interest. Relating to these developments through SWSS and Stand Up To Racism has to be central to the party's work on campus.

Marxist education

Joining Labour and concentrating on internal battles within its structures is obviously a pull on newly radicalised students. While within anti-racism Marxist explanations are a minority position among students. This situation means while casting a wide net with SUTR and SWSS, Marxist education has to be a priority to retain students.

We have a relative lack of cadre on campus compared to previous periods meaning there isn't a "conveyor belt" whereby experienced students help to develop newer students.

We need to eventually move towards having "self-organising" SWSS groups, related to local branches and the student office. SWSS members will have to take on the routine on campus, this flows from political commitment. Some of the student offices most successful initiatives have been on education, including the day school and London young members caucus.

Anti-racism and ideological struggle

We have to fight for Marxist ideas within the anti-racist movement. Currently Privilege theory is the "common sense" of those getting involved in anti-racist activism. Privilege theory can attract some of the more militant or angry students.

Further some people's adherence to it can be relatively shallow, as aspects of it clash with political practice and everyday life in Britain. We need to make sure our publications and meeting titles relate to this audience.

To have an adequate Marxist critique we need to know what people mean by Cultural Appropriation, micro-aggression, colourism and White Supremacy etc. Through interest in Black Lives Matter and the anti-racist movement in general there has also been a renewed interest in figures of black liberation. Malcolm X, Frantz Fanon, Angela Davis, the Black Panthers among others.

While not from our tradition these figures are usually connected with Marxism in some way. This gives us an "in" we shouldn't neglect.

Suggestions:

- ISJ meetings on campus. Based on articles within the journal which can be sent out before the meeting. ISJ national events integrated with student work.
- A standard reading list for SWSS nationally.
- More frequent educationals along the lines of the trans liberation day school and cultural appropriation meeting.

The student movement today

A debate has opened up about the NUS demonstration and the state of the student movement in general. NCAFC activists have criticised sections of the left for concentrating on getting elected to Student Union and national positions within NUS.

They have also said that holding the demonstration on a Saturday was a mistake (many students work), the slogan/publicity was uninspiring and student unions often lack the experience to build demonstrations.

Certainly, being elected to a position within a national union shouldn't be seen as an end in itself but a means to help build the confidence of students to fight.

This becomes more difficult if there isn't a big movement to counteract bureaucratic pressure or the person isn't involved in an organisation which has its own democratic accountability.

This cannot explain the current state of the student movement, neither can the other criticisms. In fact, the election of left wing officers highlights a growing political radicalisation among layers of students.

In 2010 the slogan and publicity from NUS was equally uninspiring and student unions had a similar low level of experience at building demonstrations. The demonstration had 50,000 people on it and led to the storming of Millbank, Tory HQ. So what's different?

The political context has changed. The Tories were newly elected promising years of austerity; this was a shock to many students who'd never lived under a Tory government. Thrown into this was the betrayal of the lib Dems, taking many students votes with their policy of getting rid of tuition fees and then trebling them. The attack directly hurt FE students with the removal of EMA and the prospect of £9,000 fees. FE students provided the numbers and militancy of many of the demos.

The backbone of many of the occupations that sprang up across the country was provided by activists in or around SWSS who'd taken part in similar occupations in support of Palestine previously.

This was equally true of the Education Activist Network bloc leading students

to Millbank. While SWSS is being rebuilt the organised revolutionary left remains smaller today.

Labour and economism

The strategies of various forces on the left are also not working to spark off a new student movement.

NCAFC narrowly focus on the issue of policies that effect students living standards or the marketisation of education. This is difficult to sustain outside of a student movement. This is similar to what Lenin called “economism”, a narrow focus on wages and conditions in the workplace ignoring wider political issues.

As is stated elsewhere most of the political radicalisation today stems from Corbynism and anti-racism. Due to the nature of the leading forces in NCAFC it is unlikely to take up anti-racism as a major focus.

Most of the organised student left are within the Labour Party. Effort seems to be going towards on orientation on winning positions and policy through CLPs, Labour Students, Momentum. This is undoubtedly taking resources away from building campaigns on campus. Corbyn rather than struggle on campus and in the streets can seem like the answer.

Where next?

Relating to a mood of radicalisation means we have to attract students on the basis of our politics, for example student networks were built before France May 68 out of Algerian and Vietnam solidarity.

Where we can we should help initiate actions on campus that provide an example to others that it's possible to resist. The rent strike at UCL have been successful in mobilising students and winning some of their demands.

Other issues may arise on campuses such as Palestine or Refugee solidarity that are not directly related to living standards. To do this we need networks of students willing to take a lead on fighting back, there is no substitute for building SWSS and SUTR.

SOCIALIST REVIEW

Socialist Review office

1) What is Socialist Review for?

Socialist Review is a monthly magazine of socialist analysis, theory and history. It seeks to guide readers through the complex political times we are living in, with more space than Socialist Worker to step back from events and assess them in the context of the SWP's political tradition.

We draw on the work of Marx and Engels as well as later revolutionary socialists such as Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Tony Cliff and Chris Harman. In 2017 we will be looking in detail at the Russian Revolution and its place in history as the greatest example of workers' power and radical democracy yet seen.

But we always seek to apply the Marxist method to the real experiences of socialists today and new debates and areas of work – such as in a number of articles on Trans politics, which will continue in the new year.

It is also the main space in the SWP's publications for writing about culture, for example the three features on radical theatre we've run in the past two years, as well as the film, theatre, music and art reviews we run every month. And we aim to review eight to ten new books in every issue, guiding our readers to the best new publications and critically engaging with current debates.

Through the interviews we run with authors we have this year, for example, introduced readers to the concept of the Anthropocene and helped to demystify it.

We've also run roundtable interviews with activists from the trade union movement, giving them space to assess their own successes and weaknesses, as well as making the lessons more widely known – as with the National Gallery strikers interview last year and the Fast Food Rights workers in the current issue.

History columns, such as John Newsinger's series on the revolutionary trade unionists in the IWW, can introduce a new generation of activists to the struggles of the past – and reminding people of America's radical workers' movement is particularly important in the age of Trump.

2) Getting it out there

Traffic on the SR website is on an upward trajectory. There were 3,792 page views on the day the December 2016 issue went live. This is a 28 percent increase on the previous month (see graph below) and a 39 percent increase on December last year.

This is partly due to the simple device of making a video with the Trump front cover, which encouraged followers to share it on social media, leading more people to the website.

Our website is an important resource as an archive too. The article by Joseph Choonara, “EU referendum: should we stay or should we go?” (July/Aug 2015) was one of the most viewed pages this year. Some much older articles, such as an interview with David Harvey from 2009, are among our most viewed pieces.

The print edition of Socialist Review has a stable subscription base, but this needs to expand. We have some 300 subscribers who renew every year, plus over 900 UK “full spectrum” (combined SW/SR/ISJ direct debit) subscriptions.

A push on full spectrum subscriptions at the Marxism festival this summer got 40 new subscribers with more coming in from the branches in August and September where comrades did targeted ring rounds.

There is an overall increase in subscriptions, but this is always mitigated by others cancelling. We aim to get the number of full spectrum subscribers up to 1,000 over the coming months.

Sales on campaigning stalls and at demos can be very strong, particularly when the cover hits the right note – so the Black Lives Matter issue in October went down well, as did the “Let them in” refugees cover in February.

But selling the Review relies on them being there and on comrades pushing sales. Most branches receive their own order of the Review, but too often this doesn't necessarily mean they are brought to meetings or sales.

We get excellent feedback from comrades about how much they enjoy the Review and find the analysis unmissable – we need to convince new members, contacts and fellow activists why they should buy and read it too.

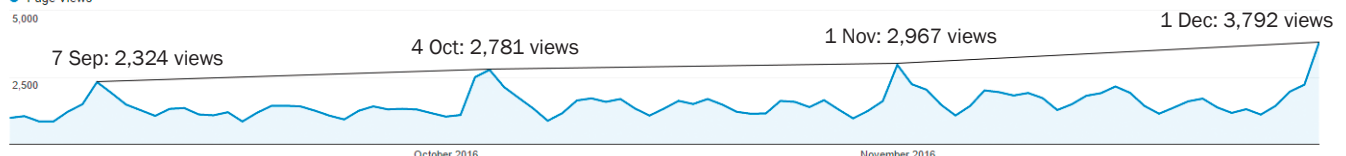
Every branch should aim to have a Review organiser, or where this isn't possible as a standalone role, someone should take responsibility for chasing up money for Review sales and staying in touch with the Review office.

Overview

Page Views VS Select a metric

Hourly Day Week Month

● Page Views



3) Developing writers

As well as feedback from branches on how sales are going, we need to know what articles people are enjoying, what they've found useful or not useful, what they want to read more of and ideas for subjects we should be covering. We also need suggestions for writers.

Socialist Review can play an important role in developing comrades' skills. Reviewing a book in 500 words sounds easy, but it requires critical analysis, thought about structure and the ability to put across an argument in clear language.

Writing an opinion column on a current debate – such as the recent piece on universal basic income – is an art, as it involves boiling complex ideas down to a few words and often taking a position on something that hasn't been discussed before.

Features of up to 3,000 words give more space to develop an argument or delve deeper into history, but they also still have to be interesting and engaging to the tired reader using their lunchbreak to catch up on reading!

We welcome new writers and ideas for articles, but please follow these guidelines:

- If you have an idea for an article or think we are missing something, give us a ring or email us at the office. We won't always get back to you straight away, but we will aim to as soon as we can.
- If you have an idea for an article you want to write yourself, please contact us first to discuss it before doing all the work. We do plan ahead and have many articles and ideas in progress at any one time. We need to discuss whether your idea fits in with our existing plans, or needs modification – and we might already have commissioned the same piece from someone else.
- Tell us about potential writers we might not know. The Trans educational the party held recently generated several ideas for articles and authors, none of whom have written for us before. Comrades often tell us if a new member (or an older one) has done a brilliant branch meeting or made a really good contribution and we try to follow up by asking them to write.

There is a wealth of talent and knowledge in the SWP, and the world is constantly throwing up new questions. Socialist Review is a place where we can use the talents of our comrades to lift the level of analysis and debate for all of us.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM JOURNAL

Camilla (ISJ)

The ISJ, like the other publications we produce, aims to give people the tools they need to understand the world in order to change it. People getting involved in activism in the era of Corbyn will be looking for answers to the big questions, and will be wondering whether to join the SWP, the Labour Party, or some other organization.

Therefore, systematic educational work including using the journal is all the more important for us. Clearly part of the role of the publications at the moment is to discuss the nature and history of the Labour Party, refugees and migration, and the rise of racism and right wing populism on both sides of the Atlantic. These are all subjects that the journal continues to publish articles on.

But there are also other areas where our theory distinguishes us from the rest of the left. For example, the analysis of the roots of the current economic crisis put forward by contributors to the journal differentiates us somewhat from other left wing groups and from people like John McDonnell.

To give another example, it is essential to have a clear and consistent position on the issue of Palestine, especially with the accusations of anti-Semitism currently aimed at the pro-Palestine movement.

The analysis developed within our tradition, particularly the emphasis we place on the working class struggles in the surrounding countries in winning Palestinian liberation, again differentiates us from many other groups on the left.

On these issues and others we can be proud of the coherent theoretical position that our party has developed.

We can use that tradition to attract people towards the party (although of course contributors to previous IBs are right to emphasize the importance of working with people with quite different ideas in various united fronts).

As a party we can attract and retain members with the clarity of our ideas and the important we place on theory as well as by being committed and hard-working activists. We need to push out wider into the movements and raise our political level, as the CC put it in the last IB. The journal plays an important role in this as a forum for the more extensive debates we need.

Marxism and nature day school

In October the journal hosted a successful day school on "Marxism and Nature" in central London. The event was attended by around 130 people.

Speakers included Ian Angus, a Canadian ecosocialist author and activist, Ted

Benton, a very well respected writer on Marxism and the environment based at the University of Essex, and several party speakers. See videos at: <http://isj.org.uk/marxism-and-nature/>

Feedback from the day suggests that people who came learnt a lot from the school. Climate change and the environment will continue to be major political issues so it is refreshing to see that party members came to this event and that it also attracted some non-members.

The two non-party speakers were also both very positive about the school and both appreciated the fact that International Socialism journal wanted to host an event on this subject.

The school demonstrates that in this area the journal, and our tradition more generally, have something useful to contribute to current debates among Marxists on issues of nature/the environment (John Bellamy Foster also spoke at Marxism this year and was very positive about the work the party and the journal are doing in this area).

Writing for the journal

To develop a cadre within the party we also need to expand on the group of people who are contributing to our publications.

In most issues of the journal some of the contributors are not SWP members and we welcome debates with other socialists. However, it is also a party publication.

It plays an important role in building the party and in establishing a cadre of members who can argue for and develop our ideas. Branches should be thinking about who in the branch could write something.

As a quarterly journal we are often able to give longer deadlines than the review or paper and have an editorial board with a range of expertise who can also help with constructive feedback.

Sales and subscriptions

The journal continues to be sold by several of our international sister organisations particularly in Ireland, Canada, Australia, Greece and The Netherlands. A comrade also takes journals to Nigeria each quarter to give to comrades building a Socialist Worker group there.

However, subscription rates to the journal among UK members could be much higher. For example, only 31 of the 52 members of the national committee currently subscribe to the party's theoretical publication!

We had some success at Marxism this year by identifying new members who don't subscribe to the publications and systematically approaching them (the Socialist Review office worked hard on this).

We can do some of this from the centre; but branches also need to encourage members and others to take out subscriptions. We can now easily give you lists of who in your branch subscribes to what publication – please just ask.

	Oct 2013	Oct 2014	Nov 2015	Nov 2016
UK subscribers	1,128	1,077	1,055	1,077
International subscribers	270	289	282	265

Branch sales are very uneven. Many branches take between 5 and 10 copies of the journal each quarter and sell most of them. But some still do not order any at all. If we want to use the journal to help build the branches this needs to be taken much more seriously. Every branch should have copies available at their meetings and on Saturday sales, even if initially you only order a small number of copies.

Branches also need to at least have someone whose responsibility it is to make a short contribution each quarter to tell people what is in the latest journal and go round selling at the end. It can help to link journal articles to the topics of meetings- a well-organized branch could hold branch meetings on some of the topics in the journal and get extra copies to sell the week before so people can read in advance.

SWSS groups should also take the same approach. SWSS meetings have been much bigger this year than in the recent past, but few have journals available for sale. To retain student members we need to win them over to our ideas and plugging the journal at the SWSS meetings is part of doing this.

Finally, individual sales are also very uneven. Some members sell journals to their contacts and colleagues but there is only a very small pool of people doing this.

People who work in higher education are an obvious group who could sell journals to colleagues and at seminars- university libraries should also be asked to take out a subscription.

But this is not just a job for UCU members, most comrades will be involved in a campaign or trade union branch where there will be people we can sell journals to.

BUILDING A BRANCH: THE HARINGEY EXPERIENCE

Simon (Haringey)

We formed Haringey Branch after party conference in January 2016 by merging two smaller branches. We 'relaunched' the branch because we felt that a larger branch would be able to take more successful local initiatives and provide a larger and more welcoming atmosphere for new comrades.

This article is focussed on how we have built our branch meetings, it is not meant as a report of all the considerable activity

that branch members have been involved in. From anti-racist and refugee work to involvement in Momentum; from Black Lives Matter to housing campaigns against 'regeneration'; from union struggles to Palestine solidarity, comrades in Haringey branch have contributed to the class struggle locally.

From the start we wanted to turn our weekly branch meeting into an attractive and lively political organising hub. This meant ensuring that activity in the real struggles was brought into the meetings and that the meetings would raise the political understanding of us all.

We consciously sought to encourage a high level of political debate to arm comrades with the arguments to cope with the deep crises of capitalism and imperialism in a rapidly changing world.

We were particularly concerned to ensure that new people felt welcome and confident to raise questions in an open and fraternal atmosphere. We have worked hard at recruiting and integrating new members and feel we have positive lessons for the party as a whole.

From the beginning we set up a branch committee which meets every week for one hour. This provides political and organisational leadership - discussing and planning meetings, united front campaigns, new members and 'contacts', paper sales, educational, contacting members, the appeal etc.

We have a division of labour with individuals taking responsibility for particular areas of work, although this can be a bit hit and miss at times (you could call it slightly chaotic or simply 'flexible'...).

The branch meeting is at the heart of our week. We always have a political introduction on a relevant issue. We try to combine meetings that help us understand our political tradition (for example, the marxist theories of gender or imperialism or class) and/or provide an analysis of topical events (for example, Corbyn, Black Lives Matter, Syria, Trump).

During October we held a series of four meetings for Black History Month which were wider than simply black history - A rebel's guide to Malcom X, Immigration and nationalism - why does capitalism need borders?, The politics of Bernie Grant, William Cuffay and the 19th century Chartist movement.

We have developed a culture in which 'there is no such thing as a stupid question' and our new members have been brilliant at raising stretching questions.

It is essential that the chair encourages new people to ask questions and make points, and ensures that experienced comrades do not hog the discussion with long contributions.

Occasionally the chair has asked everyone to speak to the person next to them for a couple of minutes after the introduction has ended - this has been successful in triggering really challenging questions, especially from new people. The only com-

rades who are allowed to speak more than once are newcomers.

Obviously we try to book good speakers and we also consciously seek out new, first-time young speakers. Recently we have encouraged more branch members to lead off discussion.

Our typical meeting has 20-25 people usually with at least one non-member. For a few weeks earlier this year we regularly had over 30 at our meetings. When comrades are confident that they will be going to an interesting meeting they come along themselves and sometimes bring a friend or colleague.

The best meeting of the year, so far, has been our public meeting on Corbyn's re-election. 45 people came including several Labour Party members and we were able to hold a serious and comradely debate.

We have been very fortunate with our venue. It has kitchen facilities and a comrade has taken responsibility for preparing tea/coffee and supplying an exceedingly good selection of biscuits.

We have a well-stocked bookstall with a bookstall organiser who organises 'book of the week' and special offers.

We advertise that 'doors open' at 7pm - not many turn up that early but it means that the meeting is well organised and there is a friendly atmosphere.

Large branch meetings mean that we have to be well organised in advance of the business section of the meeting. A long list of tasks with a show of hands is the kiss of death.

We try to ensure that there is a short political introduction, say about SUTR or other campaign activity, hopefully introduced by a newish member and which enables as many people to speak as possible.

Critically, we produce an 'Activity Sheet', after discussion at the branch committee, which is circulated at the branch and comrades can sign up for campaign stalls and sales or campaign meetings. The paper organiser can then try to plug any gaps.

This method has its drawbacks but, in truth, however you organise, the key to generating lots of activity is the political motivation provided by an interesting and large meeting.

We try to hold two SW stalls on a Saturday and two sales at tubes on a Friday. This does not always happen and we have failed to maintain any regular workplace sales. Our sales of SW are far too low which has to be our main focus in the new year.

All our branch meetings have well-designed black and white leaflets ready the week before.

We have a Facebook page to advertise branch meetings but it is questionable how effective this is - hopefully this will improve now that one of our new members is putting some serious (and competent) effort into it.

Every week every member is texted

about the meeting and about our activities. Typically every member gets 2 or 3 texts a week. At the height of a political crisis texts have gone out daily.

Texting is useful but in our experience when we really need to pull the stops out we have to organise a ring round from the branch committee.

Every few weeks we hold a 'public' meeting which basically means that we produce colour leaflets and posters and we pay to 'boost' our FB event.

Our experience is that by far the most successful methods for attracting new people are personal contacts and posterings - in shop windows, on bus stops.

We recruited a number of new members in the spring and summer, mainly young comrades. Most of our new members have come through anti-racist work, our Is Socialism Possible? rally in May and from Marxism.

We were very lucky to recruit a school student at a SUTR rally - she transformed the branch by asking challenging questions and bringing along some friends.

The entire membership was lifted, confidence grew and suddenly we found ourselves recruiting 2 or 3 new young members every week! This did not last but it has shown us all what is possible.

Four of our new young members are solid branch activists, with two now on the branch committee. Some of the new recruits have fallen away but half a dozen others are still in regular contact with the branch without appearing at branch meetings or activities very often.

It takes consistent hard work to develop our relationship with new members, most on zero-hour contracts with shiftwork and housing difficulties.

The arrival of new members has confirmed our need for highly political branch meetings and political education. Going to the pub after the branch meeting or for a coffee after a sale have been important.

When the media barrage against Corbyn included the red scare against 'Trots' we gave every new member a copy of the Rebels' Guide to Trotsky.

We have also started a series of Sunday educationals for new members focussed around a film followed by discussion and soup. So far we have shown 'Missing' (following up a branch meeting on the lessons of Chile 1973) and 'Still the Enemy Within' about the miners' strike, which was triggered by a new member requesting education on British labour history.

The discussion about the latter covered the role of the state and of TU leaders, the potential for mass struggle, how workers' ideas can change and so on. Every branch and SWSS group should show and discuss this film. Future film shows include 'The Square', about the Egyptian Revolution, and 'Land and Freedom'.

There are inevitable political difficulties of operating in a world in deep crisis with a low level of struggle and a strong pull from left reformism.

But we feel we are pointing in the right direction and that there are good opportunities to influence events and to recruit the next generation of revolutionaries.

The perspective of a new member

I trained as a mental health nurse during the recession and have worked through the austerity measures implemented by the Conservative government. The effects on patients' health and social care have been impossible to ignore and the negative impact on NHS staff evident.

I was surprised then when I heard Jeremy Corbyn - a politician - speaking about alternatives to austerity, and linking my experiences with wider social and class issues. I decided I should join the Labour Party, feeling optimistic that change was possible. In the few months I spent as a (passive) Labour party member my political education remained stagnant and my energy for socialism untapped.

Going about my daily life, I attended a Stand Up To Racism event in London; there I met a comrade selling the Socialist Worker: "I won't have time to read that!" I told him. He engaged me in conversation anyway, and introduced me to a comrade from my local area. He also encouraged me to sign up for Socialist Worker articles to be sent to my phone via Whatsapp.

Within a day I was receiving articles about refugees, strikes involving lecturers and junior doctors in the UK, and train drivers in France; after living in London for years and trying to avoid the evening paper that's given out for free, it was a refreshing change, and I was intrigued to find out more.

The local comrade I'd been introduced to encouraged me to attend an "Is Socialism Possible?" rally. I was surprised by the amount of people in attendance, inspired by the discussion about local workplace struggle and solidarity, and even more impressed with the link up internationally with workers in Ireland and France.

I felt more energetic about an alternative to the current system than ever before and became a member of the SWP that evening.

Since joining, the ability to discuss socialist ideas, and get educated and active has been invigorating - cancelling my Labour party membership was an easy decision.

BUILDING IN AN FE COLLEGE IN GLASGOW

Helen, Charlie, Ian, Kalsoom, (Glasgow)

Langside FE College, on the south side of Glasgow is one campus of Glasgow City College. We have maintained a presence outside Langside College, for a few years, consisting of a paper sale at the college entrance on a Friday morning between 8 and 9am.

On average we would sell around 5 or 6 papers. We had regular contact with students who bought the paper and over this period two students joined the party.

In August this year, however, we changed focus. We visited the college three times in the first week of term to identify the busiest time and the busiest day as many students are on placements or on day release from work.

We changed from Friday to Thursday, which also meant that the paper got to the college sooner, giving us time to advertise branch meetings and weekend activity. And we changed the time to 11.45 till 1pm, the lunch hour for students, lecturers and support staff.

Crucially, we also decided that instead of just 1 or 2 comrades doing a paper sale, we would involve more comrades and run a stall at the college entrance.

Since August, we have run a very lively stall for 12 weeks, occasionally with 2 comrades, more often with 3 or 4 and one week we had 5 comrades at the college gates.

We now have a pool of around 8 comrades who are contacted about coming along to the stall and we make weekly reports to the SW organisers as well as to comrades who are involved in other student paper sales. We have been much more consistent and more organised in our approach and there is a strong sense of purpose on our weekly stall and paper sale.

Most weeks we will feed into branch meeting discussions something of our experience at Langside College, which is consistently mainly positive.

There is no doubt that our lively stall makes a big visual impact. We always have SWP and SUTR posters decorating the stall, we've had petitions on anti-racism, refugee children, anti-austerity, the NHS and Dump Trump. We have both SW and SUTR petitions. Every week we have campaigning leaflets about events and activities. This week we'll be collecting for the Campaign to Welcome Refugees appeal for Christmas toys for refugee children.

The dominant message from our stall has consistently been fighting racism and fighting austerity. We take donations for SUTR badges and promote membership of SUTR. We have now introduced a pamphlets/books section on the stall.

We are not surprised that the paper sale

has increased significantly. Across the last 12 weeks, the paper sale has never been less than 10. The average number of papers sold is now 14. The Dump Trump petitions connected brilliantly with how students and college workers felt after the US presidential election. We had queues of people at the stall who just wanted to talk about it. We were selling Socialist Worker as the antidote to 'Trump trauma'.

In the four weeks since this, our paper sale has been 13, 16, 19 and last week 20 papers. There are around 5/6 people who buy the paper every week and the rest are mostly new buyers each week.

We estimate that there are around 100 students/workers in the college who have bought Socialist Worker at least once. Not everyone is going to buy the paper every week. Many of the SW sales result from discussions around the stall.

As a result of these discussions, 10 students bought tickets for the Marxism in Scotland event. Seven of these actually came along, including 2 Sudanese students, 3 Iranian Marxists, 1 Iraqi asylum seeker and a student from Glasgow who joined the party at the event.

The whole college population passes our stall at lunchtime, including lecturers and support staff. The relationship developing between some of the workers in the college and the comrades on the SWP stall means that this is not just a student stall; it is also a workplace sale.

There are three union branches in the college. Lecturers are in EIS Fela, and support workers are in Unison or the GMB. We have a very positive political relationship with union representatives in the college. In the first week of term we learned of a strike by support workers who were members of Unison. The strike was the following week. We went along to join the Unison picket on the day of the strike. There were nearly 30 pickets covering 3 college entrances and we spoke to them all, distributed a Socialist Worker strike bulletin and gave them copies of the previous week's paper.

We sent a photo of the main picket to SW, along with report on the strike which argued that it was a very solid strike but that more coordination between Unison and GMB officials could have resulted in joint pickets on the same strike day rather than support workers having to walk through each other's picket lines as they were striking on different days over the same issues affecting members from both unions. This was a big issue being discussed by the pickets.

The photo of the Langside picket and a report on the strike were prominently featured in Socialist Worker the following week and an EIS Fela activist took 6 papers from our stall to distribute round the Unison branch members.

Some lecturers buy the paper every week and some Unison members buy SW less regularly. But every week, there are workers from the college who will stop and chat with us about the issues they are facing at

work or the political situation in general. This week we will leaflet the college workers for a Unite the Resistance meeting in Glasgow next week.

There has always been a strong anti-racist focus in our leaflets and petitions. We are planning to collate the contact details that students and college workers have given and organise through this and the stall to suggest the setting up of a SUTR group within the college in the New Year to build for the March 18th demo.

We also want to discuss with EIS Fela, Unison and GMB members the issue of union affiliation to SUTR. We need to improve the link between the stall/paper sale and the branch meetings by having a leaflet every week advertising our weekly political meetings.

There is no objective reason why we can't build in FE colleges. Our experience at Langside seems to show that a more consistent and better organised political approach can help to develop our relationship with both students and college workers, increase the sales of SW, build SUTR and build the party.

A SOCIALIST RESPONSE TO TRANS EXCLUSIONARY AND TRANS-CRITICAL FEMINISM

Laura (Wakefield)

The report by Sue C in a previous IB summarised the activity and interventions that LGBT+ members and others have been engaged in over the past year. They mark a significant step forward in this area of the Party's work.

This summary of points relates to issues which have emerged (or re-emerged) recently in regard to transgender politics. Some of the points were discussed at a recent Party transgender day school. They are intended to offer some clarification and a contribution to discussion.

1) The main form of oppression being ramped up in Britain, Europe and the US today (especially post-Trump's election victory) is racism. Most of the media and the political establishment are either fostering or acquiescing in islamophobia, anti-refugee, anti-migrant and anti-Eastern European hostility.

Islamophobia is being used in some quarters to find an audience for racism among LGBT+ people against Muslims. We know some LGBT+ people have supported

the EDL in the past and some LGBT+ people in the US support Trump's election. Elsewhere, one survey suggested that a third of gay married couples in France support Le Pen. We know there is no automatic affinity or solidarity between oppressed groups. If we are to address this effectively we need to look at class and the ideology of the family.

2) While attitudes towards LGBT+ people in general in the UK have softened in recent decades homophobia and transphobia remain deeply rooted. One perceptive recent article on transgender people, 'Who Do You Think You Are?' by feminist Jacqueline Rose (London Review of Books, 5th May 2016) noted that:

"It is a paradox of the transsexual bid for emancipation that the more visible trans people become, the more they seem to excite, as well as acceptance, a peculiarly murderous hatred."

The lists of murdered trans people read out at recent Transgender Day of Remembrance events reinforces this point.

3) Transphobia exists as a combination of 'casual' social discrimination, harassment and hate crime alongside deeply embedded institutional transphobia. In addition there continues to be hostility towards trans people from some radical feminists, sometimes referred to as "Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists".

In the UK these feminists have included Germaine Greer, Julie Bindel, Julie Burchill and Sheila Jeffries. I don't think it is very helpful in debates with those influenced by their ideas to simply apply the term TERFs to such people as a pejorative label. We need to understand the genesis of their hostility towards transgender people if we are to undercut it.

4) That hostility consists of opposition to the involvement of transgender women in various political arenas (reproductive rights campaigns, conferences, rape crisis centres, for example) and in their access to what are generally seen as women-only spaces in wider society (such as public toilets and changing rooms).

Such opposition seems in practice to assume (among other misconceptions) that transgender people can be neatly divided into *only* transwomen or transmen rather than the huge variety of self-definitions and identifications common among trans people today such as genderqueer, gender fluid, non-binary, both genders, neither gender (agender), and so on.

5) This issue has become a particularly significant public one in the US where one state, North Carolina, passed a federal-exemption law last year banning transwomen from public bathrooms (toilets) and giving organisations the right to discriminate against LGBT+ people. Similar moves are

planned elsewhere.

Such moves are linked to attempts by organised right wing bigots to roll back LGBT+ rights usually on the basis of defending the family, women's safety, and now including (in schools) the beginnings of attempts to insist that schools must 'out' LGBT+ students because schools should not legally be able to 'keep secrets' from parents. Given Trump's election and his appointment of a rogue's gallery of bigots to his administration these attempts are likely to multiply.

We should note that, just as Trump's election has sparked mass protests and opposition so many LGBT+ people and supporters, and some businesses, as well as many feminists, have criticised these moves. There has, for example, been a boycott of North Carolina for much of this year which is reported to have cost the state at least half a billion dollars in lost revenue.

6) Emerging trans-criticism is also an issue in the UK, though less so than in the US at the moment. For example, a group of trans-critical radical feminists picketed the parliamentary committee reporting on transgender rights in the UK earlier this year demanding transgender people should be banned from women's spaces.

There have been other examples including Radfem banning transwomen in the past from their annual conferences. These moves and others have provoked outcries from many trans activists, including an attempt to no-platform Germaine Greer from speaking at Cardiff University at the end of 2015.

7) There is currently a discussion on trans exclusion going on in the NUT and this may arise in other unions. It is being pushed by some feminists in the union. Among other things they are critical of the many trans people who insist that 'self-declaration' should be the basis of gender identity recognition. They also express concerns that quite young children may be pushed or pigeonholed into gender categories at too early an age, ie that there is a safeguarding issue. These arguments are being pushed by websites like Transgender Trend.

There is a broader criticism, too, that what they disparagingly call the 'transgender trend' is reinforcing gender stereotypes and bourgeois gender roles, and is a top-down process supported by the neoliberal establishment. This last, of course, insultingly ignores the role that often highly marginalised trans people have played in struggles for gay and trans rights against the establishment and the police.

The counterargument to this set of criticisms is the fact that children are already being pigeonholed (ie socialised) day in and day out, and that transgender children who come out ought to be given the support to explore the reality of their emerging gender identities for themselves. It is possible that this might involve medically supervised puberty hormone blockers

and family counselling to provide time and space for this to take place, and socialists should unequivocally support this.

While children who express gender variant views should have the space to change their minds, the alternative to offering such support is actually the denial of their authenticity, ie in practice a transphobic response which can have very damaging consequences.

8) Trans-critical articles have been carried in the Morning Star in the past year. The Morning Star was criticised by trade union trans activists at this year's TUC LGBT conference for running a one-sided 'debate' detrimental to trans people.

Some trans activists and supportive feminists have responded in writing to these articles, such as Juno Roche and Annette Pryce from the NUT. They point out, rightly, that such attacks do not take place in a political vacuum and the sidelining of transphobia which they represent can have damaging and even deadly consequences.

9) It is important to recognise that (a) such trans exclusionary views are being promoted by only a minority of feminists, and (b) this hostility is not new. It was a feature of some separatist and radical feminist strands and political lesbianism in the 1970s and 80s. It was articulated in Janice Raymond's 1979 book, 'The Transsexual Empire', which claimed that transgender women are just men in drag who are essentially and inevitably part of the patriarchy and therefore all potential rapists.

10) We should point out that the impact of such hostility is very damaging to trans people. It is noticeable that in the MS articles referred to (and on similarly themed websites eg. the blog 'Freer Lives') the existence of transphobia is often completely ignored or merely paid lip service.

Despite their protestations to the contrary, by effectively denying the reality of transphobia they give left cover for right wing transphobic bigots who are in reality also the worst sexists, misogynists and oppressors of women.

Such views in practice have in the past (and will be today) used to justify further marginalisation of trans people and the ongoing transphobia in public services like health, the justice system, housing and social care, just as Janice Raymond's views did in Reagan's 1980s USA.

11) *Our response should start from what women and transgender people have in common in capitalist society, not the differences.*

The reality is that both are subject to huge and often violent oppression. That oppression is rooted in the material conditions of capitalism, their common exploitation as part of the working class, and the role of the nuclear family in the production and reproduction of the next generation of workers.

12) It follows that both oppressed groups' real interests lie, as with all the oppressed, in solidarity with one another and with workers, and recognition that the potential for both trans and women's liberation can only be realised through the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a socialist society. There are plenty of examples showing that revolutionary upheavals and advances won by workers' struggles can result in major advances for oppressed people. In respect of LGBT+ rights the 1917 Russian Revolution is perhaps the best of these.

13) Trans exclusionary or trans-critical notions have their ideological roots in forms of identity politics, ie the belief that the fundamental contradictions in society are between men and women (or blacks and whites, etc) rather than between economic classes. Sometimes such people will talk mistakenly about 'sex classes'. Thus they claim that all men benefit in some way from the oppression of women, and all men are said in various ways to collude, overtly or covertly, in the oppression of women.

In the eyes of some radical feminists a person's sex has essential (ie inborn, biological and exclusive) qualities which means there can be no such thing as 'changing sex'. Women will always be women, and men will always be men, whatever they do to their bodies, however they describe themselves and whatever they 'feel' their identity to be. Trans women are really men and must be excluded from women's spaces.

Such views obviously endorse binary sex and gender notions. They relate to current debates about who is a woman, what is it to be male or female, what it means to express femininity or masculinity.

14) This form of radical feminism may not be endorsed by most of today's feminists but the dominant ideological position among people who would describe themselves as feminist variously includes 'common sense' notions like intersectionality, queer theory and privilege theory which either derive directly from identity theory and postmodernist relativism, and/or which eschew the central role played by class and class struggle and with which we as Marxists fundamentally disagree. This is despite many of them agreeing that social class may be *one* of the elements in oppression.

15) Our disagreement is not just with their rejection of historical materialism but also because such approaches reject the centrality of exploitation and collective class struggle in favour of individualised solutions such as privilege-checking and 'calling out' other people's privileges, and consciousness-raising as a political tactic.

Socialists argue that class and class struggle are not peripheral or 'also rans' in oppression but constitute its very roots. Rejecting this leads to dead-end demobilising and divisive arguments about who is more oppressed and who therefore has the greater right to be heard.

16) These ideological differences with most feminists should never, however, prevent us from working together wherever possible. But failing to challenge such approaches would be mistaken and we should sensitively and patiently take opportunities to debate our differences while *remembering that such feminists are not the main enemy, the capitalist class is.*

The conclusions from these last points mean that we should not support attempts to ban or no-platform trans exclusionary or trans-critical feminists. This is a real debate on some campuses and is more broadly linked to demands for 'safe spaces' and opposition to 'giving offence', both of which are flawed political concepts.

No platforming should only apply to fascists, who by definition are ideologically outside the democratic pale.

It is a political tactic intended to tag them as what they are (nazis) and deny them any legitimacy since their aim is to smash democracy, the organised working class and trade unions, rival political parties and any source of potential opposition, as well of course as focusing on oppressed groups as scapegoats. Again, this position needs to be firmly but sensitively argued.

I would also suggest we would not support the attempts by some trans activists (more particularly in the US at the moment) to rename 'women's oppression' or 'women's rights campaigns' of various sorts as 'people's rights' or similar. Women's oppression is a real phenomenon which should not be terminologically erased. Some other forms of words could be adopted if necessary which can recognise the necessary inclusion of transwomen and transmen.

RADICALISATION

Anne and Martin (Ealing)

The CC has emphasised again and again that the period we are living in one is of radicalisation as hundreds of thousands of young people move to the left. The Party has to relate to these, and because most of them see no further than Corbyn at the moment, we must employ the united front tactic. And the united front with the widest appeal and perhaps the most urgency is Stand Up To Racism.

It should be obvious that an organised group of comrades is many times more effective in instigating a united front, and operating within it, than individual isolated members. The latter are far more likely to be won over to the reformist side than comrades in a group of revolutionaries steeped in our politics.

And if the tactic is successful and local people become interested in us, there has to be something regular to take them to, chiefly to illustrate how our party differs

from the movement, but also because without this they are likely to drift away.

Surely it follows then, that as our organisation is still very weak on the ground, the political necessity now is to rebuild our branches alongside the united front.

Unfortunately anyone trying to do this knows how difficult it can be, not so much due to outside conditions but because too many comrades see themselves as above this work.

Many seem still to be wedded to the outdated party culture that regards branch work as low level and the comrades involved in it low level too.

This work is now politically necessary and if the likes of Cliff and Lenin were prepared to roll up their sleeves, members who feel above it now may have a somewhat elevated sense of their own importance. Whatever a comrade is doing politically at the moment it is unlikely to be as important as the cooperative building of party organisation/united front activity on the ground. The branch is not now the lowliest organ of the party but the fighting unit in the forefront of our work. It is a vital entity in its own right and shouldn't be treated purely as a support mechanism for individuals in their own workplaces, universities or campaigns.

A further problem arises if any of these "notables" do choose to attend branches regularly. They hail from a culture where new members are there not to be befriended, enlightened and encouraged, but to be licked into shape, corrected and put down, just as long as hierarchy is preserved. So even though the CC rightly says that branches must be welcoming, new members and contacts in such circumstances will have entered at the bottom of a pecking order and will feel neither at home nor valued.

The new culture runs absolutely counter to this, valuing everyone as able to contribute something useful to the collective effort. It is inevitable then that, precisely because these two approaches are in every respect direct opposites, there will be a clash between those ascribing to the new one and those who persist with the old.

We've seen a number of such disputes in recent times and worryingly, there is only ever one outcome.

Whatever damage and upset they've caused, however uninformed of our politics, however much they intrigue and make a healthy branch impossible, the self-styled "trustee" will be supported.

It seems that above all, their status and indeed the whole hierarchical system must be preserved at any cost.

This is surely a definition of conservatism within any organisation. Leadership is a good and necessary thing for progress, but this isn't leadership. It is assumed superiority over the rank and file and has the effect of holding us back.

So there we have it. The political necessity is for members to go out and build

their branch and initiate united front activity at the same time. But too few "celebrities" are willing or able to do this work and the rank & file aren't trusted to do it.

If the r&f do try, they are so often stopped in their tracks the moment their activity compromises the "celebrity". So despite the efforts of the CC, the party almost unconsciously is still bound up tightly in a conservatism of hierarchy and assumed superiority which continues to limit us. We have then consciously to break with this culture and adapt our activities and our thinking to the times.

In the early 1990s when the party was twice the size and growing, we two began to write in the IBs about a lack of commitment to new, dynamic branches. For us this was an ensuing weakness on the ground which could cost us dear in the future. Every day since has confirmed this. The party membership now has to expect, and be expected to be highly active, building our branches, and understanding this is not just for instant results but to sow vital seeds for the future.

HOW WE CAN FIGHT BACK IN WALES

Martin (Swansea)

Gary (Swansea) was right to draw attention to complexities in Wales. Whilst everyone in Britain has had to endure populist, far right and nazi representation in the European Parliament, in Wales we have had, since the last Welsh Government elections, a substantial amount of UKIP AMs who are knocking on the door of very real economic power and who try to act as an opposition to the 'Establishment' Government, which includes Labour and the often much better (anti-racism, steel) Plaid Cymru.

As you would expect whilst claiming to be the 'anti establishment voice of the people' UKIP are also popularising and legitimising racism as they are invited to contribute to newspapers, tv and radio to pass comment.

Unfortunately I think we are guilty of not giving UKIP a hard enough time since they were elected. I think organised opposition in UKIP in Wales is well overdue.

But as Gary says we have another problem in Wales. Welsh Labour used to boast about not being Tony Blair now they make it clear they are not Jeremy Corbyn.

Welsh Government is a proper government with real powers, its not a local or regional council it is a national government. 'Blame London' is simply not good enough. Welsh Labour is the Welsh Gov-

ernment and they are making cuts.

Welsh Labour don't even apologise for the cuts. Sometimes we hear moans about financial settlements but in the main they focus on producing policies which replace expenditure with 'personal empowerment' and 'community cohesion'.

The cuts are then passed on to local government. Some Labour councillors are hoping that Jeremy will ride in and rescue them but others also love the keyboard tapping of 'work being done' on this or that community empowering policy whilst they make preparations to bring in the third sector (or worse) to run departments.

All we see are cuts, early voluntary redundancies and closures all accompanied with a warning of more cuts to come.

Momentum are indeed (as Gary says) tied to the left wing Labour Grass Roots campaign, and they in turn very much see change as coming through a long process of passing resolutions in the constituencies. The truth is they simply don't upset Welsh Labour.

However, many of the thousands who joined Labour in Wales around Corbyn actually want something else. They do want to fight racism and I believe they also want to oppose cuts.

Welsh Labour recently changed their tuition fees policy. Their previous policy was part of the raft of policies (with free prescriptions and free parking at hospitals) that together created the clear red water between New Labour and Welsh Labour.

This retreat went almost unnoticed and unchallenged. I think we should have tried to make something of this. A protest at the Senedd would have at least shown that there was opposition. Why didn't we? Could it be we think it's not the most important thing to do and that it may detract from the main task of organising anti-racist resistance?

Organising a mass movement against racism in Wales is definitely the right thing to do. We know it, the people who joined Labour here know it. I am sure we will rise to the task.

However I also think we will be giving the populists space if we don't try and organise resistance to the cuts in Wales. Surely we have to oppose Labour cuts in Wales in the same way we opposed cuts by Blair and Brown.

LEADERSHIP, CADRE AND DETAIL

Paul (Haringey)

Capitalism is creating havoc

Capitalism in protracted economic stagnation creates reactionary and backward ideas; and with the rise of the new Right, we are now facing a deep political and ideological crisis.

Resistance has taken sometimes spectacular forms, but with overall low levels of class struggle on our side, the model of the Leninist working class party has been severely squeezed.

Seemingly more attractive are the appeals of autonomism, and left reformism under Jeremy Corbyn, and others elsewhere in the world.

How can we respond?

We need to rediscover a political practice that engages with the contradictions within working class consciousness. We need to find ways, both old and new, to put our arguments in a practical way to those around us.

Looking back, here is Duncan Hallas, speaking about the leadership and the cadre at Marxism 1998:

"You see, we have a significant layer of members, some of them call themselves sympathisers but they are effectively members, who now and again engage in activity, but they're not really interested in dialectical materialism, or you name it. These members are essential. Under conditions where a party grows rapidly, they will be a majority."

And also,

"There has to be an intermediate layer, a cadre, meaning not super theoreticians or people who are experts on economics, but people who are seriously committed to building the organisation and who have this dual relationship, relationship with workers outside the organisation, and an interactive relationship with the leadership of the time being. Now that's the hardest thing of all to achieve."

Coming back to 2016, it seems to me that this kind of vision is just what we need today.

We have to address a range of different audiences.

We have to relate simultaneously to a minority which agrees with us on the need for radical action against the racists and bosses; and a more conservative or reformist majority within the working class, which holds a wide range of other views and opin-

ions. It is not the militant minority that is the potentially revolutionary class, but the wider working class, including strands which may not support us much at the moment.

With that preamble, what follows are some notes about seemingly minor matters: our culture and practice around hard copy paper sales, and our smaller branches.

Hard copy paper sales

Something is badly missing from the CC document on SW and electronic media (IB1), where on the electronic side some numbers for interactions are shared with us, helping to prompt positive suggestions as to how we could do better; but on the hard copy paper side, we are given a series of generalisations and no numbers, and little reference to the question of selling the paper to individuals.

The CC's How can the SWP build and grow in the era of Corbynism? (IB2) rectifies the matter in part. But I think we need a closer attention to selling around campaigns. For local branches this will often mean small scale and low level work. This needs to be properly visible and accountable, and SW organisers need to collate and circulate information about what is being done.

People active in campaigns are a serious audience for us. We must talk politics, while we test out ideas in practice.

Selling papers around campaigns is an antidote to the otherwise almost inevitable movementist drift: the unfortunate tendency to becoming the best and most committed campaigners, without the politics being properly spelled and argued out.

We should be working in a range of campaigns, and not just things that the party has initiated nationally, or that have comrades playing a leading role. It makes sense to use the paper sensitively, getting the papers out at a tea break from an activity, or in the café or bar after a meeting.

We are not the German Communist Party in miniature. We do not have some historic right to hegemonise the movement. Instead, we have to earn influence, and we need to use the paper to learn from the class.

The numbers of papers sold in this way might not be huge, but these sales are important. As we used to say, selling one paper is good, and selling two is better. Let's not forget what people are saying and thinking as we sell the papers: it needs to be a dialogue.

Yet Party Notes, and the weekly notes for paper sales, do not reflect this approach at the moment. The lowest number of papers sold in the reports seems to be ten! We wish.

Selling some papers, fairly often, helps to keep the politics alive. We need to have as many of our members as possible talking politics with the people around them, and collecting money to support our paper.

While it is possible to build out of public

paper sales, there is also an intrinsic tendency to rack up a good number of papers sold, and then go for a cup of tea and do it again next week. However, focusing on follow ups, or on what we have actually learned from doing the sale, would mean using just the contact method that seems to be downplayed in this year's perspectives.

The communists must learn from the class, and all paperselling activity is a way of embedding this learning process.

Smaller branches

We need to hear more about smaller branches, outside the cities. Consistent work and modest expectations must be the way forward.

But when much more is achieved, as at Chesterfield, let us hear how it is done. Portsmouth, Scarborough and Dorset are other areas that we need to learn from – sustaining party work in these localities helps us to rebalance the metropolitan areas where the party is stronger: but the metropolis is never the whole story. All comments and feedback are welcome.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON BREXIT

Phil (Burnley)

Adam (Harlow) makes a very valid point in the second pre-conference bulletin. He criticises those comrades who did not follow our democratic centralist approach and who publicly argued for Remain in the EU referendum, thus ignoring the conference decision to campaign for Lexit.

I can only assume that the party leadership felt that the issue was such a tricky one that it would be counter-productive to try to exert discipline on those members.

A year ago in our pre-conference discussion on the EU, I personally argued for abstention. I fully agreed with the party view that the EU is a bosses' neoliberal club which had clobbered Greece for daring to resist austerity and which was putting up "fortress Europe" barriers against refugees. We clearly couldn't vote Remain.

But I felt that any Lexit voice would be totally drowned out by the noise of the racist right-wing UKIP and Tory mob who were leading the Brexit campaign. I also felt that a victory for Leave under those circumstances could lead to a shift to the right in British politics.

So I argued in the pre-conference period for abstention and "a plague on both your houses". (Or "Neither the bosses' fortress Europe nor Little Englander racism, but international socialism".)

However, once the Party Conference

had voted to campaign for Lexit, I accepted the democratic decision, even though I personally still had doubts. As a Party member (although an older one who is no longer very active), I believe in the democratic centralist principle that Adam refers to. So I put the arguments for Lexit to the people I'm in contact with; I voted for Leave; and I got a letter published in our local paper putting the Lexit argument.

But now that we are again in the pre-conference discussion period, we can reflect on our stand on the issue and learn lessons for the future.

I fully agree with the Party's analysis of the referendum result. The Brexit vote was a contradictory mixture. There were racist elements to it, but it was mainly an anti-establishment protest vote. (We have now seen precisely the same contradictions in the massive but misguided protest vote that has led to the vile Trump's victory in the USA.)

It is also true that if Corbyn had put himself at the head of the Lexit campaign, it would have transformed the atmosphere. But the fact is that Corbyn did *not* do that. So the Lexit arguments, as I feared, were marginalised by the dominant right-wing Brexit campaign.

What about my other fear, which was that a result in favour of Brexit would lead to a shift to the right? Well, the situation since the result has certainly been contradictory, and we clearly must now campaign for unity against racism and for a Brexit that favours the workers, not the bosses. But I can't help feeling that, although it has caused splits amongst the Tories, on balance the outcome of the referendum has actually shifted the political atmosphere to the right.

Of course, in principle we take an anti-EU stance. But shouldn't we look tactically at the concrete circumstances before we decide exactly what to argue in a particular situation? If there had been a mass campaign in Greece to leave the EU in 2015 at the height of the anti-austerity protests, then clearly that would have been a real Left Exit campaign.

Or if Britain had still been in the EU when some future Corbyn-style government took office, and if the EU had prevented that government from carrying out left-reformist policies, then a campaign to leave the EU in that situation would have been Lexit one.

But what if our worst fears about France come about? What if the fascists of the French National Front make gains and end up leading a campaign for France to leave the EU? If the French left were big and strong enough to run a viable Left Exit campaign as an alternative to the Nazis, then that's one thing. But it would be a very different thing if the French left were not big enough to do that. What if some future French Exit campaign was totally dominated by the Nazis? Could we really say that French socialists should argue for Leave in those circumstances?

WALKING THE TIGHTROPE, THE UNITED FRONT

Tim (Norwich)

I am writing this article because I believe that United Front work is of extra importance within the current political period and based on experiences in Norwich I don't think all our members grasp how you operate in a United Front to be successful.

Broadly speaking I agree with the party leadership about the perspective, the strategy and the tactics. There is a level of political radicalisation going on in society. The centre is breaking up and creating instability causing polarisation to the left and the right.

Alongside this there is a collider scope of different ideas swirling around – identity politics, feminism, privilege theory, the anti-politics of the indignados movement, hostility to parties, the Remain politics of a rightward bigoted working class, reformism and so on.

But the level of class struggle is very low and in practical terms this means theories cannot be tested out to their final conclusion. Which means we are a minority in terms of having a class politics based on the power of the working class to give the social movements the weapon to punch through and achieve victories.

All of this makes the United Front harder and a rocky road. Charlie Kimber and Paul MCgrar have talked about the dangers on the one hand of submerging yourself too much into the United Front that you are no longer arguing a revolutionary position. And of the other danger of sectarianism. Which is an inability to work with wider forces and political forces to our right.

I feel in the current climate revolutionaries have to be humble (because we are in a minority) and extremely patient. We also have to grasp the necessity in a United Front of working "with" and "against" the people involved.

In our strongest areas of the country I feel the party does this such as London, Manchester and Birmingham. But in weaker areas we aren't doing it successfully and I believe many party members don't fully understand how to operate within a United Front.

Within the Norwich branch we have a serious of ongoing comradely arguments and debates on how we work within United Fronts, which forms the basis of my article.

Sometimes we approach United Fronts with the idea that we as Revolutionaries know best and get frustrated when the people involved in wider United Fronts don't do what we think is the right course of action. Or worse when we come under political pressure from political forces who want to sideline us we get sectarian and react to them.

We also need greater patience and political clarity to argue with people. Lenin's mantra of patiently explaining is so important. In many ways it's our attitude that can be the problem rather than our political arguments. I believe we need to be more cool under pressure and more fraternal and try to see things from the point of view of the other person – in order to win them to our politics.

Most people don't see the world in terms of class politics. And why should they? The working class hasn't proven that it can break through.

Many ideas such as the anti politics of the Indignados movements or the intersectionality and privileged theories of the feminist movement explain the surface day to day experience of capitalism.

Ultimately they don't offer a way forward but we first have to start with why people would see the world from that point of view.

As Marxists we start with where people are at not where we would like them to be.

The key to united front work is working "with" and "against" people within the United Fronts.

Working "with" people in United fronts is crucial. We have to earn peoples' respect by struggling alongside them and showing in practice that the revolutionary method can bring results.

Again I feel there is a tendency, especially with myself, or assuming that because we've done X, Y and Z before we should be given respect. In reality revolutionaries have to re-earn their spurs all the time and can't go into a new united front assuming we can jump forward to the harder political arguments.

There is also a danger in our branch of comrades not going to United Front meetings and ignoring them because of the kinds of politics we disagree with.

At the last conference we talked about the importance of taking something practical to every United Front meeting and always having something practical that we are aiming to get out of a meeting.

There has to be thought put into what we raise and if we do win the political leadership of a United Front we must constantly have something we're aiming for.

Occasionally in Norwich we're worked really hard to gain the political leadership of some important United Fronts only to burn out a little and not know where to go next.

The second component of the United Front is working "against" people in United Front. This can be conservative (with a small c) political forces that will at certain stages hold back the struggle such as the Trade Union bureaucracy.

But in the broadest term it means being involved in the political arguments within United Fronts about strategy and tactics and putting the Revolutionary alternative.

On the whole I don't think we're as good at doing as we would like to think. This is the hardest aspect. This involves arguing with people about the best way forward. Which has to be done from a fraternal point of view and with great patience. There is a tendency

to talk down to people. We cannot do that.

But it does mean putting an independent revolutionary point of view and at times trying to break people away from political ideas that are a deadend. Again if we do the "with" right then the "against" will organically develop because we will have practical examples to point to.

In Norwich we find this hard to do. Often we're either too pally with people on the left and allow their political ideas to go unchallenged over fear we'll break the United front or we flip to the other end and become sectarian and react to everything.

Putting the "with" and "against" together requires the party arguing a coherent strategy over and doing it. It means willing to break politically with people and with political ideas. It requires political clarity above all about the forces we are working with.

To summarise broadly speaking I feel the political leadership of the SWP has the right strategy and tactics but that many members in branches where we are not so strong don't fully understand the United Front and how you operate within it. I think the leadership and party needs to have an argument over how we operate in order that every comrade understands what is required.

We should have branch meetings on the United Front where appropriate and maybe an article or two on the United Front such as the article Chris Harmans wrote on "Spontaneity, strategy and politics" written for the ISJ in Autumn 2004.

LEXIT THROUGH STRUGGLE

Barry (Bradford)

Thinking back on the debate a year ago about the referendum, it is remarkable that (as far as I recall) no-one gave any consideration to exactly how Lexit would be achieved. On reflection, this was a pity, a some specificity on this would have clarified our position, most especially to those sections of the left who voted 'anti-racist' Remain, who are well represented inside Momentum.

Exit through Article 50 is the route of those in the ruling class who support Brexit. It employs the existing institutions of the state, and is a method originated from inside them. By its nature it is under the control of the ruling class.

Should Corbyn be able to form a cabinet before exit (not an impossibility, since on the reasonable basis that if the Lib Dems manage to recover 20 seats Labour would only have to win 30 to be the only possible government – a 1910 scenario), then he would be in this straight jacket, and the most likely outcome is that Labour would have to end up saying that no acceptable

deal could be achieved and there would have to be a second referendum to approve this decision.

To avoid having to enter the minefield of debates about a second referendum we should approach Lexit as if there never had been the first one. In a sense, this is the strategy that our Irish comrades are following in the Water Charges campaign.

If they succeed in their objective of coercing the Irish government in abolishing the Water Charges, it will be illegal under EU law. This will eventually (since the EU will try to avoid a direct confrontation for as long as possible) lead to fines a millions of Euros per day being levied. Since I would assume that the position would then be to tell the Commission, ECJ etc to get lost, eventually the ruling institutions of the EU would have to face a choice:

- a) To effectively begin to exclude Ireland from the EU (there is the problem of there being no mechanism to meet this situation);
- b) To give in – for obvious reasons, not an appealing thought because of the danger of contagion;

Probably once matters got to this point contagion would have occurred anyway, in which case everything would have changed. Point (a) is what I have called 'Lexit through struggle' – coercing the government and the state to do things in the interests of the working class which are incompatible with the principles and frameworks of the EU.

This exposes the weakness of the 'anti-racist Remain position'. Since they have now got themselves into a position of betting the bank on retaining EU membership on the free movement principle, they are wide open to a counter attack if, for instance, any anti-austerity campaign reaches the point of the Water Charges one.

All any Labour Party and TU leadership have to say at that point would be 'We can't out our membership of the EU at risk' and the 'anti-racist Remainers' would be skewered.

So there would seem to be considerable advantages for us to call for 'Lexit through struggle'. It gives us a strategy to implement, rather than hovering around a procedure run by the institutions of the ruling class over which we have no influence.

It enables us to clarify our position with the large number of Labour Party members who we wish to join with to fight, and who we wish to influence, but who have been drawn into the 'anti-racist Remain' camp.

Finally, it gives us the opportunity to directly relate to the fight of our Irish comrades, which is part of a movement that is an alternative to the EU overlooked (surprise, surprise) by the bourgeois media in their single minded infatuation with the European ultra-right.

LEXIT AND FREE MOVEMENT

John (Haringey)

It was a mistake the majority of the left did not campaign for Leave. We can argue the extent to which this is understandable. But the consequences of that mistake are with us now as much of the left, including a few people in our own organisation (and I agree with comrade Adam from Harlow on this point), have accepted this interpretation: that it was a racist vote to end "free movement" from the EU.

The internalisation of this interpretation, and the attendant demoralisation, is one reason there has been no push-back challenging this narrative from the left. This is having serious consequences. Witness the speed at which Blairite wing on the Labour is prepared to jettison the principle of free movement.

But Lexit campaign was problematic: the platform was formed too late and the campaign had almost no impact outside a few urban centres - if my anecdotal experience is anything to go by.

I cycled right across Essex in early June from Harwich to Epping, passing important towns such as Chelmsford and Colchester, without seeing a single Lexit poster. Nevertheless, the fact that there was a left voice campaigning for Leave is on record.

It is now important because it gives us credibility amongst working class voters in campaigning for anti-neoliberal exit from the EU. But it would be a huge waste of that effort if those of who campaigned for Lexit are now silent.

It is for this reason that I welcome the initiative taken by the comrades in the UCU who are now organising to defend free movement. But this initiative is insufficient on its own. Their initiative needs to be extended to encompass the entire Party. We need one or two new national campaigns involving trades unions, NGOs, connecting with anti-racist campaigns to: (1) defend free movement; and (2) for an anti-neoliberal Brexit.

We need to form national platforms that can unite left former Leave and Remain campaigners and high profile media campaigns putting across these demands.

If we lose on free movement it will be a big setback for workers in Britain. It will divide 'native' British workers from the three million EU workers who are integral part of the the British working class; and it will be a setback for all migrant workers in the UK, reinforcing the idea that immigration is a "problem" which has to be "solved".

Note that EU migration accounts for only 50% of net migration to the UK. The loss of free movement for EU citizens will strengthen demand to clamp down even

further on immigration from outside the EU.

Those of us who campaigned for Lexit now have a very important role to play in preventing this outcome and help to rebuild the left on a genuinely internationalist and anti-neoliberal basis.

DISABILITY, ACCESS AND THEORY

Mark (Lewisham), Roger (Brixton) and Rob (Birmingham)

We would like to thank all those who worked on Marxism 2016 - this year the team were more confident and better prepared in dealing with access issues. The team briefing on accessibility clearly improved the experience for disabled attendees and we believe this success should be built on for Marxism 2017.

One area that is important for this is confirming access arrangements as early as possible. We recognise that this was hindered by conditions imposed by the venue for the 2016 event, and raise it here in a constructive sense as it is a vital precondition in allowing us to push Marxism out to a wider audience amongst disabled people we are working alongside in the struggle.

A number of us met after the event and discussed what went well and to note down suggestions for improvements for the following year. We will make these notes available to the Marxism organisers in 2017.

We also believe it is important to generalise the best practice on access and inclusion across the party branches as far as possible within the constraints of organising in a world where lack of control over our built environment and other factors put obstacles in our way.

We would welcome input from comrades who face barriers and/or with experience of working to improve access to meetings and demonstrations towards producing a short guide on this subject. Please email r.lewis450@btinternet.com if you would like to assist us with this work.

We also welcome the widening engagement with theoretical discussion around the subject of disability, particularly in the wake of Roddy Slorach's book 'A Very Capitalist Condition' - we hope that this will continue and encourage comrades to both read around the subject and also to contribute to the party publications - if you have an interest in studying or writing on the subject please email: mark.dunk@gmail.com

WHY A BOOKSTALL IS IMPORTANT

Martin (Manchester City Centre)

2016 has thrown up some sharp political debates - the EU Referendum, Climate Change, Trump's election and ongoing events in Syria. Having a bookstall which has a wide range of material is thus crucial for socialists. In Manchester book stalls continue to be an important part of developing the political level of comrades.

Sales of pamphlets and cheaper books, especially the Rebel's Guides, continue to be high.

When there are sharp debates we see higher sales of publications that address these questions - so the SW pamphlet arguing the case for a Left Exit was a big seller around the Referendum among activists from both sides of the debate. The party's Syria pamphlet continues to play an important role.

We always have a large bookstall at SWP event and every branch has its own local bookstall. The district bookstall also has a high turnover of second hand books, particularly the Marxist classics, which is useful at a time when incomes are squeezed by austerity.

Experience also shows that if meeting speakers refer to books, or suggest reading, sales improve. It's worth comrades thinking about how to do this in meetings. It is also important to think through what books to have.

There are a bewildering number of left wing books on economic crisis, but not all of them will clearly answer all the questions and win people to a Marxist understanding of crisis.

Chris Harman's *Zombie Capitalism* and Michael Robert's *Long Depression* are two books that are readily accessible, and will really help clarify readers understanding.

Finally, throw out the old tatty pamphlets that are no longer relevant, or outdated. There is nothing so off-putting on a stall as an outdated coffee stained pamphlet from the 1980s. Make sure the bookstalls reflect contemporary debates and are regularly refreshed with new books and pamphlets that attract new activists and those with big existing libraries!

READING MATTERS

Donny (Edinburgh)

In the current period where there is a relatively low level of struggle but a great many challenges (in particular the rise of racism and the radical right) comrades can be pulled in a number of directions.

One could be to retreat into theory - to understanding the complexity of current events without intervening; another could be to focus exclusively on the key issue of the moment - anti-racism, without recourse to theory.

It is always true that, in dialectical fashion, we walk on both legs - practice and theory. But when the tension between the two is very great it is more difficult to do.

One thing we have noticed in Edinburgh branch is that we are able to pick up a number of new members and contacts who, if they could be integrated, would make a valuable addition to a branch which is lively, effective and engaged, but not being renewed sufficiently over time.

The problem is that very, very often these new members and contacts, if they are young, work ridiculous hours and shifts and so find it very difficult to get to branch meetings regularly.

For that reason it is difficult to cadre-ise them (sorry about the term). For that to happen it requires theoretical development as well as learning through struggle.

So the challenge is - what is to be done, apart from moan? The idea would be to have branch meetings on a flexible, shift system matching the crazy hours people work, but that's not going to happen.

But books/pamphlets/journals can be read at odd hours, between shifts and so on. Treated passively they are a weak way of developing people, but if accompanied by one-to-one discussions at times that suit, the potential is there. Incidentally, online meetings (Marxism etc) could also play a role. For these to work it would require both the appropriate written materials and online materials and face-to-face follow up.

It's a different way of working, but while the standard branch meeting must remain a bedrock of how the party works, these alternative ways should be thought about, and the bookstall organiser can play the leading role here.

BOOKS ARE WEAPONS

Tony (Walthamstow)

We are going through a complex period which constantly throws up new theoretical as well as practical challenges.

The Corbyn phenomenon, the Brexit vote, the election of Trump, climate change, the continuing slump are just examples of the huge challenges we face.

The classical Marxist tradition of which we are part provides us with a rich treasury of revolutionary theory to help us make sense of it all and, crucially, a guide to how we can intervene. Our own International Socialism Tendency continues to contribute to this. Even the most experienced comrade can never stop learning.

The most important way for comrades to develop into rounded revolutionaries is through active involvement in the struggle. A lot can also be learned through going to branch meetings, reading the paper and Socialist Review, attending Marxism and talking to informally to other comrades. But reading books is essential if comrades are to develop a deeper political understanding, particularly when reality does not appear to immediately reflect our view of the world.

A good grasp of Marxist theory enables comrades to see the bigger picture, "the actuality of the revolution", beyond the ups and down of the daily struggle. This is a crucial part of retaining and developing comrades in the longer term.

A branch bookstall is a vital part of the education of comrades, encouraging them to read and giving them access to the Marxist tradition. Walthamstow branch has run a successful bookstall for the last few years which has done very good business despite Bookmarks being only a tube ride away and the wealth of free material available on the Marxist Internet Archive.

We have sold 148 books so far in 2016 taking a total £632.81. The top sellers are Jeremy Corbyn, Labour and the fight for socialism, Bob Marley: Roots, reggae and revolution, 1916: Ireland's revolutionary tradition and the rebel's guides to Malcolm X and James Connolly.

I have also recently sold a copy of Trotsky's History of the Russian Revolution to a relatively new comrade and hope to get more comrades reading this totally fantastic book as the anniversary approaches.

Twenty different comrades as well as some contacts have brought books at branch meetings, paper sales and the occasional united front meeting where it has been possible to set up the stall.

The majority of books have been bought by the newer members but experienced comrades also buy books from the stall. Of course buying a book is no guarantee that it will not lie on a shelf unread. As branch book stall organiser I keep a record of every book sold and who to and try to discuss with

buyers what they have got out of the book and what they should read next.

At almost every meeting I sell at least one book or pamphlet. The stall has far more books than I can bring to the meetings but this does help me to try to keep the stall fresh and bring along a selection of titles relevant to meeting topics and key current issues.

I try to display a mixture of Marxist classics and more current books on the stall. I also have a supply of second hand books donated by comrades which I sell for whatever price comrades can afford or are prepared to pay. Money is obviously an issue, particularly for younger comrades, so I accept a deposit and payment in instalments to encourage comrades to read.

There is no reason for every branch not to have at least a modest bookstall. I started out with a loan from the branch to get the bookstall going and we have a branch account with Bookmarks into which the branch pays a small amount of money monthly and which entitles the branch to a discount on new books.

Even without this the bookstall runs at a surplus so I can always afford to buy new books without having to pay for them myself. Only one of the party branches I have visited recently to do meetings has a bookstall.

Obviously it is harder for branches outside London but everybody has access to the Bookmarks website and the shop will post orders around the country. Every branch should have a bookstall as a high level of politics is a vital part of building the party.

TIME TO ORGANISE THE RANK AND FILE IN THE NUT?

Amanda (Walthamstow)

I am concerned about the current direction the NUT teachers' fraction is going in.

We had a day of strike action over funding, workload and academies in the summer and expected another strike day in the autumn term.

The autumn strike day was never called because "the strike ballot turnout was low". There were reasons for the low turnout. The government had backtracked on forced academies. If the ballot had included SATs it would have had a bigger turnout, as everyone was angry about the fact the government had, at the last minute, moved the goalposts.

However, the demonstration on the day of the strike was fantastic. Every time we have had strike action, young teachers show their strength of feeling on the demonstrations and their hope to make changes.

Our members argued on the NEC that we should strike, but having lost the argument appear to have done little to address the reasons the NEC majority gave for not calling action. It strikes me that this could be because our strategy as a whole has become too closely entwined with the bureaucracy's.

What should be done about this situation?

Our answer seems to be to move the focus of our activity into anti-racism, building STUR and building a new left in the union through anti-racist work.

Meanwhile, cuts are starting to bite ever deeper in schools, support staff have been cut and workload is increasing. Surely we should be in the forefront of organising for strike action to stop this.

We should be trying to get a model motion through schools and every NUT division arguing for action over the deteriorating situation in schools as a result of funding cuts and the damaging testing regime.

The motion should call for regular meetings of NUT representatives to monitor what is going on in schools and to educate, agitate and organise in schools. Regional meetings of activists and reps should also be called.

We are moving into uncertain times, where either the left or right could win. We need to build for strike action in order to take on the austerity agenda and the rise of racism. We need to offer an alternative to the destruction that austerity and the neo-liberal agenda is having on our education system.

STAND UP TO RACISM IN PORTSMOUTH

Simon (Portsmouth)

Stand Up To Racism in Portsmouth have just enjoyed a spectacular rally. Is important to look back to ascertain how we got here.

The Black Lives Matter Movement was something that was talked and read about down here, and I imagine in a lot of places the issue of refugee solidarity was a more central issue. Black Lives Matter does not exist as an entity down here.

The Focus for most of our activities has been around refugee solidarity, and this is probably the case for a lot of branches outside London and major cities. The Tory council set its sights on demanding no more refugees and pushing through austerity cuts, this also involved dismantling the hate crimes unit.

Stand Up To Racism therefore led the campaign locally in solidarity with refugees and opposing the closure of the HC unit.

We had a lively 100 strong rally Guild-

hall Square for the council meeting over the cuts and it was not missed by the local newspaper that the only support council leader Donna Jones and the Tories got publicly on the day was from 10 members of the local English Defence League.

A week after the closure of the hate crimes unit a pig's head was thrown over the wall of the local Muslim school. We followed this up with a 50+ strong rally at the Guildhall library with Sabby Dhalu as the main speaker and this really put Stand Up To Racism on the map.

It was mainly through solidarity work over refugees doing collections trip to Calais et cetera we maintained the presence of Stand Up To Racism.

The party locally has a high level of credibility due to our antiracist campaigns through UAF against the BNP and the EDL. The EDL can barely muster a dozen people for their protests now.

It is becoming clearer now the real thrust of racism is actually come from central government and the print media. The BNP is now dead as a political force and the EDL no longer represents a serious street movement. Nick Griffin's political future is now firmly behind him and Tommy Robinson couldn't get arrested.

Whilst it appears that the right-wing of the Labour Party haven't really taken on board the anger against the professional political class Teresa May clearly has.

It became clear from Tory party conference with any backlash over policies is going be deflected towards refugees and immigrants, if they have their way.

In Amber Rudd's constituency after her ludicrous speech to Tory conference over employers becoming border guards the front page of her local paper ran with the headline "Rivers of Rudd" a clear reference to the politics of Powellism.

Although there are people who seem to think that racism only became a problem after the referendum, there is clearly a spike in racist rhetoric and behaviour. There is, however also a spike in anti-racism.

It was emphasised in our branch that building Stand Up To Racism had to become an absolutely priority. Racism has become central to all the issues that we are campaigning around.

They can be no coherent fight against austerity without a fight against racism. The impacts on arguments about housing, education, employment, health and everything else that we are doing.

The issue of race in a period where there is little workplace militancy is creating a poisonous atmosphere and can potentially become a powerful wedge issue when the class does begin to move. Therefore Stand Up To Racism is absolutely central to everything we do.

UAF has been an enormous success and it's obvious that we need to maintain its presence as we don't know how things might develop with the growth fascism in Europe and the forthcoming Presiden-

tial campaign in France specifically. It has been successful in smashing both the BNP and the EDL. Let's not keep it a secret.

The success of the conference in London attended by Jeremy Corbyn and Diane Abbott obviously gave a huge boost to SUTR nationally and made it much easier for us to push Stand Up To Racism in workplaces, trade unions and the left.

The success of Donald Trump's election campaign, and it's blatant racism has given added impetus to the antiracist struggle. Anti semitism became part of the political discourse in the Presidential election. The fact that white supremacists and Nazis can now rebrand themselves as the Alt Right has drawn new people into the antiracist movement. Presumably the KKK can now start referring to themselves as the sheet wearing community.

The key to building our recent successful rally with Moazzam Begg and a broad panel of local activists that pulled in a hundred and 10 people was due to pushing out on every front available.

We organised a Love Music Hate Racism gig with local HipHop and RnB acts, we gave out thousands of leaflets we leafleted the Students Union repeatedly, we worked through the local Trades Council, we attached posters to lampposts we sent out texts, we aggressively used Facebook to promote the event. In short we did everything we could think of.

There is an old bromide that 50% of publicity does not work, but nobody knows which 50%. There is simply no magic bullet, you have to do everything.

The event was a massive success and probably the biggest Antiracist event in Portsmouth in generations. If we can do it, the same success can be replicated in towns and villages across the country.

Stand Up To Racism potentially could be the biggest mass movement we have been involved in many years and invites comparisons with the Anti-Nazi league. We have to see it in broader terms than other United Front work we have done.

This means we may still be amongst it's leadership but we have to intervene in it as well, at grass roots level, in a way we haven't done for a long time. The breadth of it means we have to move out of our comfort zone. There are real opportunities out there to build something magnificent.

AUSTERITY

Huw (Bristol)

There is general agreement within the SWP regarding the current period. One of political crisis exacerbated by Brexit within the context of a sluggish response to recovery since the 2008 crash, a radicalization around Corbyn with a low level of industrial struggle combined with a significant increase in racism.

The question is how do we as revolutionaries relate to those looking to Corbyn and this includes those who haven't joined the labour party as well as the hundreds of thousands who have.

The main answer given in the perspective documents has been Stand Up To Racism. The success of the conference is an indicator that this united front has the potential to be one which can look to involve large numbers of people in activity and if successful to have an impact within the wider working class.

I agree that anti racism is an area of work which is vitally important and has the possibility of mobilizing many people opposed to racism in its many forms.

However, I am concerned that we do not in the process neglect other areas of work which for sake of brevity can be put under the heading of anti austerity.

The main fault line in the UK is the onslaught on peoples living standards not just wages or directly workplace related but including housing, Benefits, NHS, education, environment and social care etc.

It is in this context that racism is pushed and can take hold and therefore the need to be central to fights over these issues whether they be national or locally based is not secondary. If the party were to retreat in any way from this then we would be reduced to commentating over the issues effecting millions of people.

One of the points put is that we have a low level of class struggle and this is proved by extremely low strike figures. That the level of strike activity is low is undeniable (and long standing) and poses problems for our argument that it is workers power as a collective that has the ability to transform the world.

For the new generation of those being radicalized there is no direct experience of this being the case. However, I think we need to make a distinction between strikes as the only form of class struggle. The fight over housing, the NHS, education or a myriad of other issues is part of the class struggle.

We are right to argue that the power of workers in the workplace as the source of profit is the location where we have the potential to hit the bosses hardest but in the absence of strikes we have to be where there is activity and resistance and think how we can at times initiate resistance.

As leading labour left figures are increasingly pulled towards an internal fight within their party alongside retreating on a number of issues and momentum has become less

focused on building resistance the need for us where we can to participate and on occasions take a lead in campaigns over a whole range of issues.

Our party publications have rightly argued for a left response to Brexit and the recent court ruling has put May in an even more protracted process in which sections of the ruling class are in conflict with it. This is a highly charged political period. However we need to build from making a very good analysis of the crisis to concrete proposals on how the left should and could respond. By concrete proposals I mean what every member of the party can do and how we can shape those around us including but not exclusively in the anti racist movement.

The rise of Corbynism poses the party with a fundamental challenge: how can we practically and politically relate to huge numbers of people radicalized by the crisis surrounding us.

Anti-racism is one element of that but it cannot be the only one and if we do not effectively respond to the myriad of struggles we will be failing to take advantage of a time which is in many ways unprecedented.

Every district of the SWP should be seeking ways in which we can deepen our roots and show in a practical way that we are the organization that seeks to mobilise people with a strategy that goes beyond waiting and hoping for success at the next general election.

This does not negate the need to prioritise and emphasize particular issues and areas of work at specific times but we cannot combat racism without integrating our anti racism work within the struggle over the social conditions which underpin it.

THE STRUGGLE ON THE WATERWAYS FLOWS ON

Marcus (Hackney East)

This article is an update on the struggle of the bargee traveller community in the UK and my strategic arguments for the effective fight back for our homes.

A bargee traveller is someone whose main home is a boat without a home mooring, i.e. without permanent residential mooring, and therefore they have no permanent fixed locality. I'm one of them, so by taking a leading part in this struggle I also defend my home.

I will not write an extensive report on the problems we face in the UK, as I have already produced an overview, titled 'Politics of the Waterways', in the 2014 pre-conference bulletin 3. You can find my old contribution online, by typing 'Politics of the Waterways SWP' into google, CPG

publicised the 2014 pre-conference bulletins online.

In the 2015 pre-conference bulletin 3, I concentrated on the main current attacks we are faced. If you want to read it please contact me on marcus2cbtrower@hotmail.com and I will send you a copy.

In this article I will concentrate on the main attack on the majority of inland waterways, the one launched by the Canal and River Trust (CRT), the biggest waterways authority in the UK.

In early 2015, they rolled out a policy that attempts to force the bargee travellers' community off the waterways.

They are doing this by threatening eviction on bargee travellers who they think haven't moved far enough in their licence period or/and have moved in a way that CRT doesn't like. CRT doesn't state what they think is the 'correct' distance to travel or the 'correct' pattern of movement. Their clearest statement says:

'very unlikely that someone would be able to satisfy us that they have been genuinely cruising if their range of movement is less than 15-20 miles over the period of their licence. In most cases we would expect it to be greater than this'.

Even here, there is a high degree of vagueness as to what would satisfy them. It still doesn't state what would satisfy them. No one knows if they will be the next one to be threatened with eviction by CRT. This way they have threatened the whole community.

The CRT attacks are felt widely in the bargee traveller community. Bargee travellers on CRT waters have either been under enforcement, undergone enforcement, or at least know someone that is.

More than a quarter of bargee travellers on CRT waters have been under enforcement so far.

The numbers of bargee traveller on CRT waters are going down a few hundred since the policy was brought in. However, so far CRT hasn't carried out many evictions, other than for boats that have been taken to court as non-residential boats. Overall, the mass evictions I expected haven't happened yet. I believe this has gone this way for four main reasons.

The first reason is that the political expression of the bargee traveller community, the National Bargee Travellers Association (NBTA) has worked hard on casework and campaigning. Casework acted as a way to support people who are in enforcement. However it has mainly been a way of suggesting the best way to bend the knee to CRT as most people don't want to take the fight to court or public. We didn't put individuals in the press if they didn't want to nor did we throw them into court to win case law, we helped the individual in what they wanted to do to stop their eviction and that was mainly trying to please CRT. In the London branch of the NBTA, which is my branch, there is a 100%

success rate for stopping evictions though casework.

Stopping individuals' evictions using casework started after one successful campaign to stop one bargee traveller. This campaign was in London to stop the eviction of a bargee traveller who already had a restricted six-month licence. CRT had sent an eviction notice on this bargee traveller for a trivial reason, they didn't like that he did two upturns instead of a 'progressive journey'. CRT didn't back down through the usual casework, and courts were not an option at this point.

We suggested a campaign to the boater who agreed. We used a petition which we sent to our members and widely publicised in the social media. There was a lot of support for the boat dweller in social media and hundreds signed the petition very quickly. CRT was forced to back down and did something they refused to do until then, they relicensed specific person with a six-month licence. After this win, CRT backed down using casework without the need of a campaign for each case.

The second reason is the pressure of bad press on CRT. In general, public opinion regards boat dwellers in positive or neutral light. Moreover, CRT is a charitable trust and is therefore worried about its public image. NBTA has made them worry more about this image by getting them bad press. We got in the press a national protest to number 10 to hand in a petition against what CRT was doing and a protest at CRT's main offices. NBTA was able to get the story across that CRT is threatening and actually evicting boat dwellers in BBC, Channel 4, newsletter papers etc. This put a lot of pressure on CRT.

The third reason is that the courts are not going in CRT's favour. CRT has been backing down before a distance or pattern movement cases get to court. It seems they are worried that if they lose a court case that could, potentially, set a legal standard. I should mention here that since 2013, there is boat dweller non distance or pattern movement related human rights case waiting to go through the courts which can set a legal precedence. There still isn't a court free to hear the case.

The fourth reason is that many people are giving up before they get anywhere near eviction by getting a home mooring or getting off the waterways altogether. A sizeable number people are moving away from this way of life without much of a fight. This is the main reason that the few hundred people have left this way of life. CRT seems happy with this as they can get numbers of bargee travellers down without it being a press thing or a court case they can lose.

That hasn't been the only strategy CRT adopted to make life harder for bargee travellers. They have been putting up signs reducing our mooring time in a place, they have taken mooring rings away from some areas or removing facilities, e.g., bin points and water taps.

Overall, we, in NBTA, have been so busy

with trying to stop evictions; we haven't had the time to really fight the rest. We mainly responded by putting out public statements against the clamp down on places where we can moor. We also built few campaigns which managed to stop some reducing mooring times. We have taken action in pushing for more facilities which has made CRT agree to put more facilities in, nevertheless we haven't been able to stop them take facilities away.

The main fight has been on CRT waterways. However, it hasn't just been the CRT attacking boat dwellers.

This year Cambridge council announced that they want to evict boat dwellers from the city centre. The Cambridge council are the land owners of some of the river banks on the River Cam and the Cam Conservancy is the navigation authority.

NBTA's local branch has been key in the local campaign against this social cleansing of bargee travellers. The national NBTA has also given some support.

Locally, Unite has been very supportive and has made Unite campaign placards and members had a good showing for a demo outside of the council's Guildhall. There is also local group called Cam Boaters which has been leading a campaign against the attack. However there has been a difficulty with the local NBTA group and Cam Boaters working together. I have taken on helping in Cambridge, so I have tried to get them to work together.

In Oxford which has both Environmental Agency (EA) and CRT waters, Oxford council wants to impose a Waterways Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). PSPOs come from the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which meant to deal with 'anti-social behaviour'.

Oxford council have decided that the general behaviour of bargee traveller is anti-social.

Things like burning wood and coal in the stove to keep warm, generating electricity using an engine or generator are said to be 'anti-social'. However, these are part of bargee traveller way of life.

The council are also blaming 'anti-social behaviour' such as public drinking and noise pollution on bargee travellers. With the PSPO they want to stop people drinking alcohol outside someone's boat and to evict a bargee traveller with 48 hour notice from a mooring place in the Oxford area.

A well organised local campaign was set up to oppose the Oxford council's plans called PSPnO Say No to the PSPO. NBTA has been involved in the group and there is a loose local NBTA branch and leading people in the campaign are NBTA members.

These local campaigns and other people from waterways outside London have been inspired to fight back and win by our London work which includes the casework, community events, newsletters, regular meetings, campaigns etc.

This as well as the national demos and local legal meetings organised by NBTA earlier this year and last year has

encouraged the making of a few other local branches. However, on CRT waters none of these local branches broke out of their embryonic stage and attract a much needed new layer of activists. Possibly because they were unable to unite over local campaigns or they didn't have the people to put in the time to commit to getting something going.

I have tried to make easier for groups by producing caseworker help sheets, art work for placards etc and started to make local organisational email lists. Although it hasn't spurred on local groups on CRT water yet. Nevertheless, there have been local demos against CRT in Leeds attracting northern bargee travellers and in Bath on the Kennet and Avon canal.

Next year we will organise another national demo to try and bring bargee travellers from across the country to protest again the attacks we are under. It will be on the Saturday 8 April at noon at Victoria Embankment Gardens, Villiers St, London, WC2N 6NS. I long with this done I will make other effects to get local groups formed and functioning.

I believe that it's important to keep together and keep winning campaigns in London. However, because CRT has framed London canals and rivers as overcrowded in the press, when people see that CRT wants to evict bargee travellers then people believe it is because the waterways are overcrowded.

Therefore, it's important that NBTA tries to get the threat of evictions or actual evictions in and outside of London into the press. This shows that there must be reasons other than the waterways must be culled to keep down overcrowding because we are evicted where there is much less bargee travellers.

The main real reason why bargee travellers across the UK are under attack is because waterway authorities and other interested parties are turning the canals and rivers into a profitable business.

For example in both Oxford and Cambridge the people leading the attacks on bargee traveller have property along the waterside and have an eye to get more there. In Brentford (London) on EA waters the council has said that they want to clear the bargee travellers out of that area so they can build a brand spanking new marina in its place.

CRT makes most of its income from property and they're not just partners on developments such as the large developments like Old Oak Common and Enfield (London), they're managing their own developments of new flash flats and houses.

As well as property, the leisure industry is another great interest of water authorities. The leisure industry has in turn demanded that bargee travellers are cleared out of areas so they have more room to turn the waterways into water amusement park.

Everywhere is the same, it is the expansion of markets into all aspects of life like a virus that turns everything into a commodity and the needs of the working class are

made secondary.

Under capitalism the capitalists want to have everything to satisfy their lust for profit. Any tool/ host; council, charity, business, the aim is the same, commodify and make profit! However, they don't always get their way.

There is a fight back on the water and we have been giving them a run for their money and we are not slowing down, the struggle flows on.

ANTI-FASCISM: THE FUTURE IS UNWRITTEN

Paul S (Brixton)

Following the victory of Trump in the US, many feel that there are resemblances to the 1930s, when fascists took power, in key European states.

There is in Europe, again, the potential for fascist organisations and figureheads to be in government; in Ukraine, open fascists *are* in office. Disturbing as times are and as understandably, fearful, as many are, there are important differences, alongside similarities, to previous times.

Trump is not a fascist, repugnant as he is and appalling as many of his senior appointments are. However, fascists such as Jobbik in Hungary, Golden Dawn and the NOP in Poland, who sent messages congratulating Trump, all recognise something of the fascist, in him. The spontaneous outpourings of anger across the US, eg the demo's at Trump Tower, were welcome displays of defiance and show some of the forces behind Bernie Sanders, fight on.

It's important to understand what fascism is and what differentiates fascists from scum like Trump.

Hitler built the National Socialists through a combination of street terror and electoral interventions. Before becoming Chancellor, after a series of setbacks, Hitler and the NSDAP, built on electoral successes in the early 1930s, and organised, eventually, 400,000 Stormtroopers.

The Nazis started small, something not lost on today's goons. They destroyed all opposition, which was of course, a potential block to him, from political opponents to replacing the German equivalent of the Boy Scouts, by the Hitler Youth.

The Nazis built concentration camps for political enemies, and those of minority religions, particularly, of course, Jews. The infamous Nuremberg laws enshrined race hate, denying German Jews civil, property and social rights, invalidated Jews' citizenship and forbade marriage to 'Ayrans'. Kristallnacht, in 1938, when hundreds of Jews were murdered, 30,000 were arrested and put in camps, synagogues and Jewish

businesses were destroyed, foreshadowed the Nazis genocidal malevolence... the Holocaust.

For some on the left to claim 'creeping fascism' exists ie Trump, will lead to poor practice, especially when faced with real, fascist organisations.

Across Europe, fascists such as in Greece, Hungary and Budapest, both stand in elections and also, have thugs, modelled on the tradition of Hitler's SA/SS. Such units, now as then, focus on eliminating those who stand against their fascist aims, from trade union meetings and marches to opposition MP's. Elections and violent curtailing of opponents run parallel for fascists, tactically used, when seen fit.

Thus, there is a uniqueness to such industrialised, ideologically driven savagery as Hitler's (or Mussolini's) and caution is needed in applying certain equivalents today. (Italy too sees the far right, Northern League, make advances)

Of note, though, is widespread support for Trump among fascists. Perhaps the key fascist adherent, in Europe, Marine Le Pen, expressed support and called it 'the start of a great movement across the word'. Far right populists and fascists recognise the ideological, and political potential for themselves, in a time of crisis. As the Southern Poverty Law Center say, 'White supremacists think their man won the White House'.

Ex KKK leader, Duke has been adulatory over Trump's accession and choice of Administration personnel. Trump eventually distanced himself from such people. However, that the likes of the KKK supported Trump, speaks volumes.

In a hark back to dark days, Black churches have been bombed and KKK graffiti appears. The so called 'Alt Right', aka, fascists, are a relatively new outpouring of Islamophobic individuals, who have emerged from the sewer that is Breitbart News. Some have been suspended from social media, given their anti Semitic and anti Islam material. One such person, Steve Bannon, now in Trump's team, is rightly regarded as complicit in fostering race hate, online.

It is little surprise then, that fascists are currently enthused. As the current French Prime Minister remarked, it's 'possible' that Marine Le Pen may be French President, next year. Indeed, the Front National (FN), have the wind in their sails, as was sickeningly revealed, on the recent BBC, Marr show. The UAF protest at her platform gained wide sympathy, and sparked a debate over her appearance.

The FN's rise, follows long term, mainstream parties concessions to the fascists, particularly over refugees plight at Calais, as comrades involved in SUTR, know only too well.

FN has demonstrated and intimidated refugees at the Jungle camp, even now, too many on the French left are not mobilising against Le Pen. She is currently polling at 30%, while, incredibly, Hollande has just

dropped out, as I write! Interestingly, Jean-Luc Mélenchon is also on 9%. Beware the polls, of course... It's no foregone conclusion, though, that Le Pen will win, there are two rounds to the election and Le Pen may stumble, in the second one.

She, of course, hopes to follow a possible success for Hofer, of the fascist Freedom Party (sic), in Presidential elections in Austria, this December. Should Hofer win, the possibility of the FPÖ going on to form a government, is real and shocking.

Figures from Austria's Freedom Party and across the far right, recently met in Sweden (itself showing growth for the fascist, Swedish Democrats). All know that disillusionment with traditional politics gives them fresh opportunities.

The AfD in Germany aim to capitalise on Merkel's drop in support. PEGIDA's relative collapse, (partly driven by anti fascists) has seen supporters flow into the AfD, who now run third in recent polls.

However, the newly formed Stand Up To Racism, is committed to undermining the AfD, on the back of successful anti PEGIDA mobilisations, and enjoys some serious support. As across Europe, there is nothing automatic about the far right's rise, thus, they can be curtailed.

Other far right, figureheads, like Wilders, in Holland, currently vie for first place with the Liberal Party in polls for elections, next March. On trial for hate speech, Wilders as with all far right and fascist parties, claims to be the voice of the "forgotten man".

In Greece, Golden Dawn supporters are believed to have been involved in recent attacks on refugees in Chios. Such Nazis are looking to rebuild, despite the long running trial against officials of the party. They have been continually rebuffed due to the work of UAF's sister organisation, KEERFA, and others. Indeed, the trial of GD, comes in no small part, as a result of anti fascists' efforts for them to be held to account.

Jobbik bask in their recent meeting with the US Ambassador and continue to create a climate whereby the Prime Minister, Orban, turns increasingly right ward. He has been called 'Europe's Trump'... Both these fascist organisations still have, alongside parliamentary groupings, street fighting squads. In this, Jobbik and GD can be compared to the Bulgarian, United Patriots Coalition. The fascist 'Coalition' did their best in a long time, recently, coming third in the recent, Presidential elections. They also have links with paramilitaries.

Of concern too, is rise in Polish nationalism, and especially the regrowth of fascists, seen on marches in Warsaw.

The Nazi National Radical Camp and the All Polish youth, led over 60,000 nationalists and Nazis, on the 2016 one. Opposition though small, exists, as witnessed by an anti fascist march, also in Warsaw, on the same day.

The Recent victory over abortion rights, spearheaded by women with some Trade

Union support and the new left party Razem (Together), show how opposition to the fascists can develop.

The growth of the far right is not all one way. As in Greece and the UK, Catalonia shows how broad based, anti fascism can halt the fascists, electorally and at street level.

Should Hofer win in Austria, there exists too, a proud (and recent) history of resistance, a beacon of light in the darkness. If street protest turns into organisation, Hofer can face real opposition.

In Britain, the searchlight temporarily fell on fascists following the murder of Jo Cox, by the fascist, Thomas Mair, (who shouted "Britain First", as he committed his savagery). Many believe, with possible justification, that this is a reference to the Islamophobic, Britain First (BF) sect.

Mair may have been on BF activities. If so, this would be no surprise. Fascists such as BF were, of course, quick to distance themselves from Mair, claiming never to have heard of him. However, Mair, was no lone wolf, and has a fascist past.

BF leader, Golding has recently, 'temporarily' stepped down from his role. This may be for fear of what follows from the Mair trial and is also a result of anti fascist, opposition.

Jo Cox's murder is a chilling example of the influence as a result of words/acts spread by fascist groups. Her killing was both horrific and a sick sign of the weakness of UK fascism.

Mair's malevolence does not exist in a vacuum eg the bile of anti immigrant, filth from many tabloids. Farage's Ad Van around the Referendum, caught the mood for many racists, but also hardened anti racists, though many social democrats proved useless, in the post Referendum, period. (There has also been a rise in youths falling prey to fascist propaganda, reported to the government's rightly castigated, Prevent programme, eg some attracted to the tiny, Hitler supporting group, National Action)

Jo Cox's murder reminds us that individual terrorism often happens as a result of fascist organisations collapse and fragmentation.

Following the routing of the National Front, by the Anti Nazi League in the late 1970s, racist murders and attacks increased. Fascists and those susceptible to the poison, assaulted minorities and the left.

The Nazi British Movement, had members jailed for racist murders and stockpiling of explosives.

As said in the CC's, IB1, currently, no UK fascist group is large numerically or in other forms ie the BNP and EDL are mere shadows of their former selves; The BNP just lost their last district councillor. This, from having had two MEPs and a million votes in 2009.

Anti fascists have whittled the fascists down here. There have been over 50 fascist demos this year, none have been large or

'breakthroughs'. As 2016 ends, revealed is fascists' impasse. But as Trump's win shows, organised bigotry can find an outlet.

IB1 is obviously right to say, Stand Up to Racism's Conference shows the "potential to build a mass movement against racism...and the fascists, here, are not in a position to benefit from rising racism".

Much has been said about the Dover, fascist riot, in January. Credit must go to anti fascists injured, in some cases, but still active. UAF members, like others there, came away more determined that fascists must be defeated.

Subsequent jailings, for once, more on the fascists side, shows the interest (not malign) the state takes in anti fascism. The repeated incursions into Dover by EDL, splinters, have failed, miserably.

Saddled with insignificant 'Leaders', British fascism is a poor relative of its European counterparts.

Subjective, wishful thinking is no substitute for inept strategy, which UK fascists clearly lack. As above, Britain First have taken a hit, and are going nowhere fast. Remember PEGIDA UK? Tommy Robinson talks big, but can't deliver. He talked of 100,000 marching with them by December 2016, the reality has been since the flops of their Birmingham marches, in February, where anti fascists mobilised... no activity. He is reduced to Twitter spats...He may return, but he is damaged goods.

Farage too, of course, talked of 100,000 in the streets this Xmas, drunken posturing perhaps, but we shouldn't underestimate the new UKIP leader, given the votes UKIP can muster.

Apart from the brilliant Durham TA's, Ritz strikes and other exceptions, the continued absence of class struggle/any lead by the TUC, can play into the hands of Nuttall, as he seeks to divert righteous anger into scapegoating. (The TUC's silence and inactivity is appalling, given what the Nasty Party are doing)

Fascists now clearly pin their hopes on UKIP, and have stepped up their attendance at UKIP gatherings. Successful, previous, Stand Up to UKIP, work, shows how to take Nuttall on.

The EDL limps on, post Robinson. Their demos have an element of farce now, around 120 dregs, beery 'speeches', and escorted home by Plod.

They started poorly in Preston, in February, a march of 500 yards, and end poorly. Their biggest, just 150, in April, in High Wycombe, was confronted by UAF and others, and was cut short, to their embarrassment.

Their last London stagger, in July, was pathetic and humiliating. Coventry, Southampton and Portsmouth too, are areas where comrades have built up local forces, which have isolated fascist visitations and strengthened our side.

Having no electoral strategy, fascists, behind police lines, sieg heil, but

unsurprisingly, don't attract any but the hardcore. National Action have not recovered from their defeat in Liverpool, last year, and without police protection... Bolton recently, saw just 80 Nazis, well outnumbered by the local TUC/UAF. Fascist splits continue to do them damage.

Rotherham was a town where fascists saw opportunities. The horrendous child sex cases, racializing of the crimes by sections of the media, and police and political corruption, locally, was manna from heaven, or so, fascists thought.

Tremendous work by SWP, UAF and allies, locally, ensured that the fascists have not got a toehold there. The Rotherham 12's victory was some reward. Fascists are trying to do similar in Telford, but again, comrades, with others, stand in their way.

Squaddism offers no way forward, when faced with Le Pen, Hofer, Golden Dawn, etc, as our inspiring Greek comrades, can explain.

It's not how the BNP and EDL were undercut, and it doesn't match up to what's needed. Breadth and militancy can combine, effectively, one size fits all, anti fascism, won't equip us for 2017. (It's laughable to see Hope Not Hate become Facebook warriors, given their record of looking to undermine mobilisations against the EDL)

There is sometimes real pressure put on comrades eg from the police, and from some allies, to go for demonstrations well away from the fascists.

Nine times out of ten, this is resisted, but the badgering is there, so continual interaction with the UAF/SUTR office must be maintained, especially when plod get uppity.

Wherever possible, fascists have to experience their weakness. On any anti fascist event, the key points must be, have the fascists been undermined, has a local united front on the ground be strengthened, how has the party done?

For now, The fascist idea of 'march & grow' has receded, here.

The fascists are small and see 'normal' politics, in the UK, as pointless. They are a Heinz 57 varieties, with often the same people on different groups' pathetic demonstrations. They want to seem important but are failing. As is the way with fascists, the smaller they get, the more vicious the violence.

They continue to look to Europe for inspiration, and should Le Pen win, will look to regroup, using UKIP, as a breeding ground.

Talk of a possible post UKIP, Trump/Tea Party style, organisation, by UKIP funders, means a bigger pool for fascists to swim in. The fascists current weakness will not last forever. This gives us limited space to organise, for any return by consequential, fascist forces.

It should be noted that There are ideological and other, differences between the above fascist groups and individuals eg some are pro EU, others are not. Some

would not wish to exchange handshakes, others do.

Tensions exist internally too, between those attracted to the streetfighting element of fascism and who deride elections and others who advocate a twin track approach. The Night of the Long Knives, may yet haunt certain organisations.

2017 will see great challenges for anti fascists. But alongside SUTR, anti fascists, via UAF, can keep the little Hitlers in their sewers.

MOTION ON PERSPECTIVES

Coventry and Warwickshire district

1) This conference restates the principle that political, industrial and organisational perspectives must start from an understanding of the economy and the balance of class forces in the workplace.

2) This conference believes that a “one-size-fits-all” approach to the economy (as summarised in Michael Robert’s “Long Depression” thesis) is incorrect for the complexities of the current period.

Instead we need to recognise that both the UK and world economy are experiencing (and have experienced over the last 20 years) crises, restructuring and growth at the same time i.e. We have to develop a theory which explains both continuous GDP growth in Australia⁴² and crisis in Greece, which explains both the 631,000 UK public sector job losses⁴³ and UK car industry boom with its resultant job vacancies⁴⁴.

Chris Harman’s description of the current period as “The New Age of Global Instability” in *Zombie Capitalism* is much nearer reality than “The Long Depression”.

3) This economic complexity feeds into the industrial perspectives – with the private sector able to win above RPI pay rises often without having to take industrial action whilst the public sector is sustaining a wage freeze.

4) This conference believes that whilst the general perspectives are correct (e.g. the analysis of generalised anger and the perspective of political trade unionism, the emphasis on SUTR and the arguments for a national action in the public sector) they need fine tuning to take account of the complexities of both the economy and the balance of class forces at work

5) Therefore Conference in addition re-asserts that;-

a) Rank and file trade unionism has to start in the section and the workplace where the activist works and must always involve looking for the economic issues which our workmates are agitated about.

b) Industrial perspectives cannot just be based on the public sector experience but have to take into account both the class coming to terms with restructuring and fighting back (deliveroo, uber) and the “ballot victories” inside the private sector, and must be based on the realisation that trade unionism has been basically stable in the UK for the last 20 years⁴⁵ and that this is a sign of resilience not of defeat.

c) Political trade unionism must mean that in addition to arguing general politics (e.g. SUTR) it must also mean arguing:

- i) the politics of why organising in the workplace is fundamental and
- ii) the politics and tools of how to organise in the workplace

⁴² <http://www.rba.gov.au/chart-pack/au-gdp-growth.html>

⁴³ <http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/public-sector-jobs-lost>

⁴⁴ <http://www.smmmt.co.uk/2016/02/5000-jobs-vacant-in-uk-automotive-due-to-skills-shortage/>

⁴⁵ <http://isj.org.uk/strikes-ballots-and-the-class-struggle-addition/>